THE BOOK OF

SCOTTISH STORY

HISTORICAL, HUMOROUS, LEGENDARY, AND IMAGINATIVE.

SELECTED FROM THE

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SECOND SERIES.

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THE UNLUCKY TOP BOOTS.

Chapter I.

OP BOOTS, as everybody must have reckoned, are now [1833] nearly altogether of fashion. Their race is all but extinct. An occasional pair may indeed still be seen encasing the brawny legs of a stout elderly country gentleman on a market day, or on the occasion of a flying visit to the metropolis; but with this exception, and with probably that of some hale obstinate bachelor octogenarian, who, in full recollection of the impression which his top boots had made on the public mind some fifty years since, still persists in thrusting his shrivelled shanks into the boots of his youth;—we say, with the first positive, and the last probable exception, this highly respectable-looking, and somewhat flashy, article of dress has entirely disappeared.

Time was, however, and we recollect it well, when matters stood far otherwise with top boots. We have a distinct vision of numberless pairs flitting before our eyes, through the mazes of the various thoroughfares of the city; but, alas! they have vanished, one after another, like stars before the light of approaching day. Rest to their *soles*—they are now gathered to their fathers—their brightness is extinguished—their glory is gone. The Conqueror of Waterloo hath conquered them also. The top boots have fallen before the Wellingtons!

We have said that we recollect when it was otherwise with top boots, and so we do. We recollect when a pair of top boots was a great object of ambition with the young, whose worldly prosperity was all yet to come—whose means of indulging in such little vanities of the flesh were yet to be acquired. To them a pair of top boots was a sort of land-mark in the voyage of life; a palpable, prominent, and desirable object to be attained; a sort of Cape Horn to be doubled. Nor were they less objects of ambition at the time we speak of—say about 40 years since—to the more advanced, whose circumstances required a long previous hint to prepare for such an event as the purchase of a pair of top boots. In short, top boots were the rage of the day. The apprentice, the moment he got "out" of his time, got "into" his top boots. The first thing the young grocer did was to get a pair of top boots. No lover then went to woo his mistress but in top boots, or at least if he did, the chance was, that he would go to very little purpose. The buckishly-inclined mechanic, too, hoarded his superfluous earnings until they reached the height of a pair of top boots, in which to entomb his lower limbs. Although their visits now, as we have already hinted, are "few and far between," we have seen the day when, instead of being but occasionally seen, like solitary points of light as they are now, on the dusky street, they converted it by their numbers into an absolute *via lactea*,—a perfect galaxy of white leather,—or shot, frequent, pale, and flitting, like northern streamers, through the dark tide of humanity as it strolled along.

No marvel is it, therefore, that, in the midst of the wide prevalence of this top boot epidemic, poor Tommy Aikin should have fallen a victim to the disease—that his heart should have been set upon a pair of top boots; nor is it a marvel that Mr Aikin should have been able finally to gratify this longing of his, seeing that he was in tolerable circumstances, or at least in such circumstances as enabled him, by retrenching a little somewhere else, to

attain the great object of his ambition —a pair of top boots. No marvel, then, as we have said, are these things which we have related of Mr Aikin; but great marvel is it that a pair of top boots should have wrought any man such mischief, as we shall presently show they did to that honest man. But let us not anticipate. Let us, as has been before wisely said, begin at the beginning, and say who Mr Aikin was, and what were the evils in which his top boots involved him.

Be it known, then, to all whom it may concern, that Mr Thomas Aikin was an officer of Excise, and was, at the period to which our story relates, residing in a certain small town not more than fifty miles distant from the city of Glasgow. Mr Aikin was a stout-made middle-aged man, exceedingly good-natured, kind, civil, and obliging. In short, he was an excellent fellow, honest and upright in all his dealings, and a faithful servant of the revenue. Everybody liked Mr Aikin, and Mr Aikin liked everybody; and sorely did everybody lament his misfortunes when they fell upon him. Mr Aikin had for many years led a happy life in the bosom of his family. He laughed and joked away, took his jug of toddy, caressed his children, spoke always affectionately to and of his wife, and was so spoken to and of by her in return. In short, Mr Aikin was a happy man up to that evil hour when he conceived the idea of possessing himself of a pair of top boots.

"Mary," said Mr Aikin, one luckless evening, to his loving wife, after having sat for about half an hour looking into the fire.

"Aweel, Thomas?" said his spouse, in token of her attention.

"I wad like to hae a pair o' tap boots," replied Mr Aikin, shortly, and without further preamble, although he had in reality bestowed a good deal of thought on the subject previously; indeed, a dim undefined vision of top boots had been floating before his mind's eye for nearly a month before it took the distinct shape of such a determination as he was now about to express.

"Aweel, Thomas," replied his better half, with equal brevity, "ye had better get a pair."

"They're decent lookin' things," rejoined Mr Aikin.

"Indeed are they," said his indulgent spouse,—"very decent and respectable, Thomas."

"Rather flashy though, I doubt, for the like o' me," quoth Mr Aikin.

"I dinna see that, Thomas, sae lang as ye're able to pay for them," remarked Mrs Aikin.

"No so very able, my dear," responded her husband; "but I wad like to hae a pair for a' that, just to wear on Sundays and collection days."

"Aweel, Thomas, get them; and what for no?" replied Mrs Aikin, "since your mind's bent on them. We'll save the price o' them aff something else."

We need not pursue further the amiable colloquy which took place on this fatal night between Mr Aikin and his wife. Suffice it to say, that that night fixed Mr Aikin's resolution to order a pair of top boots. On the very next day he was measured for the said boots; and late on the Saturday evening following, the boots, with their tops carefully papered, to protect them from injury, were regularly delivered by an apprentice boy into the hands of Mrs Aikin herself, for her husband's interest.

As Mr Aikin was not himself in the house when the boots were brought home, they were placed in a corner of the parlour to await his pleasure; and certainly nothing could look more harmless or more inoffensive than did these treacherous boots, as they now stood, with their muffled tops and shining feet, in the corner of Mr Aikin's

parlour. But alas! alas! shortsighted mortals that we are, that could not foresee the slightest portion of the evils with which these rascally boots were fraught! To shorten our story as much as possible, we proceed to say that Mr Aikin at length came home, and being directed to where the boots lay, he raised them up in one hand, holding a candle in the other; and having turned them round and round several times, admiring their gloss and fair proportions, laid them down again with a calm quiet smile of satisfaction, and retired to bed.

Sunday came, the church bells rang, and Mr Aikin sallied forth in all the pomp and glory of a pair of spick and span new top boots. With all Mr Aikin's good qualities, there was, however,—and we forgot to mention it before,—a "leetle" touch of personal vanity; the slightest imaginable it was, but still such an ingredient did enter into the composition of his character, and it was this weakness, as philosophers call it, which made him hold his head at an unwonted height, and throw out his legs with a flourish, and plant his foot with a firmness and decision on this particular Sunday, which was quite unusual with him, or, at least, which had passed unnoticed before. With the exception, however, of a few passing remarks, in which there was neither much acrimony nor much novelty, Mr Aikin's boots were allowed to go to and from the church in peace and quietness. "Hae ye seen Mr Aikin's tap boots?" "Faith, Mr Aikin looks weel in his tap boots." "Mr Aikin was unco grand the day in his tap boots." Such and such like were the only observations which Mr Aikin's top boots elicited on the first Sunday of their appearance. Sunday after Sunday came and departed, and with the Sundays came also and departed Mr Aikin's top boots, for he wore them only on that sacred day, and on collection days, as he himself originally proposed. Like every other marvel, they at length sank quietly to rest, becoming so associated and identified with the wearer, that no one ever thought of discussing them separately. Deceitful calm—treacherous silence!—it was but the gathering of the storm.

It so happened that Mr Aikin, in the language of the Excise, surveyed, that is, ascertained and levied the duties payable by a tanner, or leather dresser, who carried on his business in the town in which Mr Aikin resided. Now, the Honourable Board of Excise were in those days extremely jealous of the fidelity of their officers, and in a spirit of suspicion of the honour and faith of man peculiar to themselves, readily listened to every report prejudicial to the character of their servants. Here, then, was an apparently intimate connection, and of the worst sort,—a pair of top boots,—between a revenue officer and a trader, a dresser of leather. Remote and obscure hints of connivance between the former and the latter began to arise, and in despite of the general esteem in which Mr Aikin was held, and the high opinion which was entertained of his worth and integrity, these hints and suspicions—such is the wickedness and perversity of human nature—gradually gained ground, until they at length reached the ears of the Board, with the most absurd aggravations.

Their honours were told, but by whom was never ascertained, that the most nefarious practices were going on in ——, and to an enormous extent. Large speculations in contraband leather, on the joint account of the officer and trader, were talked of; the one sinking his capital, the other sacrificing the king's duties. Whole hogsheads of manufactured boots and shoes were said to be exported to the West Indies, as the common adventure of the officer and trader. The entire family and friends of the former, to the tenth

degree of propinquity, were said to have been supplied gratis with boots and shoes for the last ten years. In short, the whole affair was laid before their honours, the Commissioners of Excise, decked out in the blackest colours, and so swollen, distorted, and exaggerated, that no man could have conceived for a moment that so monstrous a tale of dishonesty and turpitude could have been manufactured out of a thing so simple as a pair of top boots. Indeed, how could he? For the boots—the real ground of the vile fabrication—were never once mentioned, nor in the slightest degree alluded to; but, as it was, the thing bore a serious aspect, and so thought the Honourable Board of Excise.

A long and grave consultation was held in the Board-room, and the result was, an order to the then collector of Excise in Glasgow to make a strict and immediate inquiry into the circumstances of the case, and to report thereon; a measure which was followed up, in a day or two afterwards, by their honours dispatching two surveying-generals, as they are called, also to Glasgow, to assist at and superintend the investigation which the collector had been directed to set on foot. On the arrival of these officers at Glasgow, they forthwith waited upon the collector, to ascertain what he had learned regarding Mr Aikin's nefarious practices. The result of the consultation, which was here again held, was a determination, on the part of the generals and the collector, to proceed to the scene of Mr Aikin's ignominy, and to prosecute their inquiries on the spot, as the most likely way of arriving at a due knowledge of the facts.

Accordingly, two chaises were hired at the expense of the Crown, one for the two generals, and another for the collector and his clerk—all this, good reader, be it remembered, arising from the simple circumstance of Mr Aikin's having indulged himself in the luxury of a single solitary pair of top boots, —and, moreover, the first pair he ever had. The gentlemen, having seated themselves in the carriages, were joined, just before starting, by a friend of the collector's, on horseback, who, agreeably to an arrangement he had made with the latter on the preceding day, now came to ride out with them to the scene of their impending labours; and thus, though of course he had nothing to do with the proceedings of the day, he added not a little to the imposing character of the procession, which was now about to move in the direction of Mr Aikin's top boots.

An hour and a half's drive brought the whole cavalcade into the little town in which the unfortunate owner of the said boots resided; and little did he think, honest man, as he eyed the procession passing the windows, marvelling the while what it could mean—little, we say, did he think that the sole and only object, *pro tempore* at least, of those who composed it, was to inquire how, and by what means, and from whom, he had gotten his top boots. Of this fact, however, he was soon made aware. In less than half an hour he was sent for, and told, for the first time, of the heavy charges which lay against him. A long, tedious investigation took place; item after item of poor Aikin's indictment melted away beneath the process of inquiry; until at length the whole affair resolved itself into the original cause of all the mischief,—the pair of top boots. Nothing which could in the slightest degree impugn Mr Aikin's honesty remained but these unlucky top boots, and for them he immediately produced his shoemaker's receipt :—

Mr Aikin,
Bought of David Anderson,
One pair of Top Boots, . . £2, 2s.
Settled in full,
David Anderson.

With this finisher the investigation

closed, and Mr Aikin stood fully and honourably acquitted of all the charges brought against him. The impression, however, which the affair made at head-quarters, was far from being favourable to him. He was ever after considered there in the light, not of an innocent man, but as one against whom nothing could be proven; and his motions were watched with the utmost vigilance. The consequence was, that, in less than three months, he was dismissed from the service of the revenue, ostensibly for some trifling omission of duty; but he himself thought, and so did everybody else, that the top boots were in reality the cause of his misfortune.

One would have thought that this was quite enough of mischief to arise from one pair of top boots, and so thought everybody but the top boots themselves, we suppose. This, however, was but a beginning of the calamities into which they walked with their unfortunate owner.

Chapter II.

About four miles distant from the town in which Mr Aikin lived, there resided an extensive coal-mine proprietor of the name of Davidson; and it so happened that he, too, had a predilection for that particular article of dress, already so often named, viz., top boots; indeed, he was never known to wear anything else in their place. Davidson was an elderly gentleman, harsh and haughty in his manner, and extremely mean in all his dealings—a manner and disposition which made him greatly disliked by the whole country, and especially by his workmen, the miners, of whom he employed upwards of a hundred and fifty. The abhorrence in which Mr Davidson was at all times held by his servants, was at this particular moment greatly increased by an attempt which he was making to reduce his workmen's wages; and to such a height had their resentment risen against their employer, that some of the more ferocious of them were heard to throw out dark hints of personal violence; and it was much feared by Davidson's friends—of whom he had, however, but a very few, and these mostly connected with him by motives of interest—that such an occurrence would, in reality, happen one night or other, and that at no great distance of time. Nor was this fear groundless.

Mr Davidson was invited to dine with a neighbouring gentleman. He accepted the invitation, very foolishly, as his family thought; but he did accept it, and went accordingly. It was in the winter time, and the house of his host was about a mile distant from his own residence. Such an opportunity as this of giving their employer a sound drubbing had been long looked for by some half dozen of Mr Davidson's workmen, and early and correct information on the subject of his dining out enabled them to avail themselves of it. The conspirators, having held a consultation, resolved to waylay Davidson on his return home. With this view they proceeded, after it became dark, in the direction of the house in which their employer was dining. Having gone about half way, they halted, and held another consultation, whereat it was determined that they should conceal themselves in a sunk fence which ran alongside of the road, until the object of their resentment approached, when they should all rush out upon him at once, and belabour him to their hearts' content. This settled, they all cowered

down into the ditch, to await the arrival of their victim. "But how will we ken him i' the dark?" said Jock Tamson, one of the conspirators, in a low whisper, to his next neighbour; "we may fa' foul o' somebody else in a mistak." The question rather posed Jock's neighbour, who immediately put it to the person next him, and he again to the next, and on went the important query, until all were in possession of it; but none could answer it. At length, one of more happy device than the rest suggested that Mr Davidson might be recognised by his top boots. The idea pleased all, and was by all considered infallible, for the fame of Mr Aikin's boots had not yet reached this particular quarter of the country. Satisfied that they had hit upon an unerring mark by which to know their man, the ruffians waited patiently for his approach.

At length, after fully two hours' watching, the fall of a footstep broke faintly on their ears; it came nearer and nearer, and became every moment more and more distinct. Breathless with the intensity of their feelings, the conspirators, in dead silence, grasped their cudgels with increased energy, and sunk themselves in the ditch until their eyes were on a level with the ground, that they might at once place the approaching object full before them, and between them and the feeble light which lingered in the western sky. In the meantime, the wayfarer approached; two dim whitey objects glimmered indistinctly in the darkness. They were instantly recognized to be Mr Davidson's top boots; a loud shout followed this feeling of conviction; the colliers rushed from their hiding-place, and in the next instant half a dozen bludgeons whistled round the ears of the unfortunate wayfarer. The sufferer roared lustily for mercy, but he roared in vain. The blows fell thick and fast upon his luckless head and shoulders, for it was necessary that the work should be done quickly; and a few seconds more saw him lying senseless and bleeding in the ditch in which his assailants had concealed themselves. Having satisfied their vengeance, the ruffians now fled, leaving their victim behind them in the condition we have described. Morning came; a man was found in a ditch, speechless, and bleeding profusely from many severe wounds on the head and face. He was dragged out, and, after cleansing his face from the blood and dirt with which it was encrusted, the unfortunate man was recognised to be—Mr Thomas Aikin!

The unlucky boots, and they alone, were the cause of poor Aikin's mischance. He had, indeed, been mauled by mistake, as the reader will have already anticipated. There was no intention whatever on the part of the colliers to do Mr Aikin any injury, for Mr Aikin, in the whole course of his harmless life, had never done them any; indeed, he was wholly unknown to them, and they to him. It was the top boots, and nothing but the top boots, that did all the mischief. But to go on with our story. Aikin was carried home, and, through the strength of a naturally good constitution and skilful surgical assistance, recovered so far in six weeks as to be able to go about as usual, although he bore to his grave with him on his face the marks of the violence which he had received, besides being disfigured by the loss of some half dozen of his front teeth.

The top boots, which poor Aikin had worn before as articles of dress, and, of course, as a matter of choice, he was now obliged to wear daily from necessity, being, as we have already related, dismissed from his situation in the Excise. One would think that Aikin had now suffered enough for his predilection for top boots, seeing—at least so far as we can see—that there was no great harm in such an apparently inoffensive indulgence; but Mr Aikin's evil s

or his top boots themselves, we do not know which, were of a totally different opinion, and on this opinion they forthwith proceeded to act.

Some weeks after the occurrence of the disaster just recorded, the little town of ———, where Aikin resided, was suddenly thrown into a state of the utmost horror and consternation by the report of a foul murder and robbery having been committed on the highway, and within a short distance of the town; and of all the inhabitants who felt horror-struck on this occasion, there was no one more horrified than Mr Thomas Aikin. The report, however, of the murder and robbery was incorrect, in so far as the unfortunate man was still living, although little more, when found in the morning, for the deed had been committed over night. Being a stranger, he was immediately conveyed to the principal inn of the town, put to bed, and medical aid called in. The fiscal, on learning that the man was still in existence, instantly summoned his clerk, and, accompanied by a magistrate, hastened to the dying man's bedside, to take down whatever particulars could be learnt from him regarding the assault and robbery. After patiently and laboriously connecting the half intelligible and disjointed sentences which they from time to time elicited from him, they made out that he was a cattle-dealer, that he belonged to Edinburgh, that he had been in Glasgow, and that, having missed the evening coach which plies between the former and the latter city, he had taken the road on foot, with the view of accomplishing one stage, and there awaiting the coming up of the next coach. They further elicited from him that he had had a large sum of money upon him, of which, of course, he had been deprived. The fiscal next proceeded to inquire if he could identify the person or persons who attacked him. He mumbled a reply in the negative.

"How many were there of them?" inquired the magistrate. "Were there more than one?"

"Only one," muttered the unfortunate man.

"Was there any peculiarity in his dress or appearance that struck you?" asked the fiscal.

He mumbled a reply, but none of the bystanders could make it out. The question was again put, and both the magistrate and fiscal stooped down simultaneously to catch the answer. After an interval it came—and what think you it was, good reader? Why, "top boots," distinctly and unequivocally. The fiscal and magistrate looked at each other for a second, but neither durst venture to hint at the astounding suspicion which the mention of these remarkable objects forced upon them.

"He wore top boots, you say?" again inquired the fiscal, to make sure that he had heard aright.

"Y-e-s, t-o-p b-o-o-ts," was again the reply.

"Was he a thin man, or a stout man?"

"A stout man."

"Young or middle-aged?"

"Middle-aged."

"Tall or short?"

"Short," groaned out the sufferer, and, with that word, the breath of life departed from him.

This event, of course, put an immediate end to the inquiry. The fiscal and magistrate now retired to consult together regarding what was best to be done, and to consider the deposition of the murdered man. There was a certain pair of top boots present to the minds of both, but the wearer of them had hitherto borne an unblemished character, and was personally known to them both as a kind-hearted, inoffensive man. Indeed, up to this hour, they would as soon have believed that the minister of the parish would commit a robbery as Mr Aikin—we say Mr Aikin, for we can no

longer conceal the fact, that it was Mr Aikin's boots, however reluctantly admitted, that flashed upon the minds of the two gentlemen of whom we are now speaking.

"The thing is impossible, incredible of such a man as Mr Aikin," said the magistrate, in reply to the first open insinuation of the fiscal, although, in saying this, he said what was not in strict accordance with certain vague suspicions which had taken possession of his own mind.

"Why, I should say so too," replied the officer of the law, "were I to judge by the character which he has hitherto borne; but here," he said, holding up the deposition of the murdered man, "here are circumstances which we cannot be warranted in overlooking, let them implicate whom they may. There is in especial the top boots," went on the fiscal; "now, there is not another pair within ten miles of us but Aikin's; for Mr Davidson, the only man whom I know that wears them besides, is now in London. There is the personal description, too, exact. And besides all this, bailie," continued the law officer, "you will recollect that Mr Aikin is and has been out of employment for the last six months; and there is no saying what a man who has a large family upon his hands will do in these circumstances."

The bailie acknowledged the force of his colleague's observations, but remarked, that, as it was a serious charge, it must be gone cautiously and warily about. "For it wad be," he said, "rather a hard matter to hang a man upon nae ither evidence than a pair o' tap boots."

"Doubtless it would," replied the fiscal; "but here is," he said, "a concatenation of circumstances—a chain of evidence, so far as it goes, perfectly entire and connected. But," he continued, as if to reconcile the bailie to the dangerous suspicion, "an alibi on the part o' Mr Aikin will set a' to rights, and blaw the hale charge awa, like peelin's o' ingans; and if he be an innocent man, bailie, he can hae nae difficulty in establishing an alibi."

Not so fast, Mr Fiscal, not so fast, if you please; this alibi was not so easily established, or rather it could not be established at all. Most unfortunately for poor Aikin, it turned out, upon an inquiry which the official authorities thought it necessary to set on foot before proceeding to extremities—that is, before taking any decisive steps against the object of their suspicion—that he had been not only absent from his own house until a late hour of the night on which the murder and robbery were committed, but had actually been at that late hour on the very identical road on which it had taken place. The truth is, that Aikin had been dining with a friend who lived about a mile into the country, and, as it unfortunately happened, in the very direction in which the crime had been perpetrated. Still, could it not have been shown that no unnecessary time had elapsed between the moment of his leaving his friend's house and his arrival at his own? Such a circumstance would surely have weighed something in his favour. So it would, probably; but alas! even this slender exculpatory incident could not be urged in his behalf; for the poor man, little dreaming of what was to happen, had drunk a tumbler or two more than enough, and had fallen asleep on the road. In short, the fiscal, considering all the circumstances of the case as they now stood, did not think it consistent with his duty either to delay proceedings longer against Aikin, or to maintain any further delicacy with regard to him. A report of the whole affair was made to the sheriff of Glasgow, who immediately ordered a warrant to be made out for the apprehension of Aikin. This instrument was given forthwith into the custody of two

criminal officers, who set out directly in a post-chaise to execute their commission.

Arriving in the middle of the night, they found poor Aikin, wholly unconscious of the situation in which he stood, in bed and sound asleep. Having roused the unhappy man, and barely allowed him time to draw on his top boots, they hurried him into the chaise, and in little more than an hour thereafter, Aikin was fairly lodged in Glasgow jail, to stand his trial for murder and robbery, and this mainly, if not wholly, on the strength of his top boots.

The day of trial came. The judge summed up the evidence, and, in an eloquent speech, directed the special attention of the jury to Aikin's top boots: indeed, on these he dwelt so much, and with such effect, that the jury returned a verdict of guilty against the prisoner at the bar, who accordingly received sentence of death, but was strongly recommended to mercy by the jury, as well on the ground of his previous good character, as on that of certain misgivings regarding the top boots, which a number of the jury could not help entertaining, in despite of their prominence in the evidence which was led against their unfortunate owner.

Aikin's friends, who could not be persuaded of his guilt, notwithstanding the strong circumstantial proof with which it was apparently established, availing themselves of this recommendation of the jury, immediately set to work to second the humane interference; and Providence in its mercy kindly assisted them. From a communication which the superintendent of police in Glasgow received from the corresponding officer in Edinburgh, about a week after Aikin's condemnation, it appeared that there were more gentlemen of suspicious character in the world who wore top boots than poor Aikin. The letter alluded to announced the capture of a notorious character—regarding whom information had been received from Bow Street—a "flash cove," fresh from London, on a foraying expedition in Scotland. The communication described him as being remarkably well dressed, and, in especial, alluded to the circumstance of his wearing top boots; concluding the whole, which was indeed the principal purpose of the letter, by inquiring if there was any charge in Glasgow against such a person as he described. The circumstance, by some fortunate chance, reached the ears of Aikin's friends, and in the hope that something might be made of it, they employed an eminent lawyer in Edinburgh to sift the matter to the bottom.

In the meantime, the Englishman in the top boots was brought to trial for another highway robbery, found guilty, and sentenced to death without hope of mercy. The lawyer whom Aikin's friends had employed, thinking this a favourable opportunity for eliciting the truth from him, seeing that he had now nothing more to fear in this world, waited upon the unfortunate man, and, amidst a confession of a long series of crimes, obtained from him that of the murder and robbery for which poor Aikin had been tried and condemned. The consequence of this important discovery was, the immediate liberation of Aikin, who again returned in peace to the bosom of his family. His friends, however, not contented with what they had done, represented the whole circumstances of the case to the Secretary of State for the Home Department; and under the impression that there lay a claim on the country for reparation for the injury, though inadvertent, which its laws had done to an innocent man, the application was replied to in favourable terms in course of post, and in less than three weeks thereafter, Mr Thomas Aikin was appointed to a situation in

the custom-house in London, worth two hundred pounds a-year. His steadiness, integrity, and general good conduct, soon procured him still further advancement, and he finally died, after enjoying his appointment for many years, in the annual receipt of more than double the sum which we have just named. And thus ends the eventful history of Mr Thomas Aikin and his Top Boots.—*Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.*

MY FIRST AND LAST PLAY.

By D. M. Moir, M.D.

The time of Tammie Bodkin's apprenticeship being nearly worn through, it behoved me, as a man attentive to business and the interests of my family, to cast my een around me in search of a callant to fill his place, as it is customary in our trade for our young men, when their time is out, taking a year's journeymanship in Edinburgh to perfect them in the mair intricate branches of the business, and learn the newest manner of the French and London fashions, by cutting claith for the young advocates, the college students, and the rest of the principal tip-top bucks.

Having, though I say it myself, the word of being a canny maister, mair than ane brought their callants to me, on reading the bill of "An Apprentice Wanted" plaistered on my shop window. Offering to bind them for the regular time, yet not wishing to take but ane, I thocht best no to fix in a hurry, and make choice of him that seemed mair exactly cut out for my purpose. In the course of a few weeks three or four cast up, among whom was a laddie of Ben Aits, the mealmonger, and a son of William Burlings, the baker; to say little of Saunders Broom, the sweep, that wad fain hae putten his blackit-looking bit creature with the ae ee under my wing; but I aye lookit to respectability in these matters, so glad was I when I got the offer of Mungo Glen.—But more of this in half a minute.

I must say I was glad of any feasible excuse to make to the sweep, to get quit of him and his laddie,—the father being a drucken ne'er-do-weel, that I wonder didna fa' lang ere this time of day from some chumley-head, and get his neck broken; so I tell't him at lang and last, when he came papping into the shop, plaguing me every time he passed, that I had fittit mysel, and that there would be nae need of his taking the trouble to call again. Upon which he gaed his blackit neeve a desperate thump on the counter, making the observe, that out of respect for him I might have given his son the preference. Though I was a wee puzzled for an answer, I said to him, for want of a better, that having a timber leg, he couldna weel crook his hough to the labroad for our trade.

"Hout, tout," said Saunders, giving his lips a smack—"crook his hough, ye body you! Do ye think his timber leg canna screw off? That'll no pass."

I was a wee dumbfoundered at this cleverness; so I said, mair on my guard, "True, true, Saunders; but he's ower little."

"Ower little, and be hanged to ye!" cried the disrespectful fellow, wheeling about on his heel, as he graspit the sneck of the shop door, and gaed a

grin that showed the only clean pairts of his body—to wit, the whites o' his een, and his sharp teeth,—"Ower little!—Pu, pu!—He's like the blackamoor's pig, then, Maister Wauch,—he's like the blackamoor's pig—he may be ver' little, but he be tam ould;" and with this he showed his back, clapping the door at his tail without wishing a good day; and I am scarcely sorry when I confess that I never cuttit claith for either father or son from that day to this ane, the losing of such a customer being no great matter at best, and amaist clear gain, compared with saddling mysel wi' a callant with only ae ee and ae leg, the tane having fa'en a victim to the dregs of the measles, and the ither having been harled aff wi' a farmer's threshing-mill. However, I got mysel properly suited.—But ye shall hear.

Our neighbour, Mrs Grassie, a widow woman, unco intimate wi' our wife, and very attentive to Benjie when he had the chincough, had a far-away cousin o' the name o' Glen, that haddit out amang the howes of the Lammermoor hills—a distant part of the country, ye observe. Auld Glen, a decent-looking body of a creature, had come in wi' his sheltie about some private matters of business—such as the buying of a horse, or something to that effect, where he could best fa' in wi't, either at our fair, or the Grassmarket, or sic like; so he had up-pitting free of expense from Mrs Grassie, on account of his relationship, Glen being second cousin to Mrs Grassie's brother's wife, wha is deceased. I might, indeed, have mentioned, that our neighbour hersel had been twice married, and had the misery of seeing out baith her gudemen; but sic was the will of fate, and she bore up with perfect resignation.

Having made a bit warm dinner ready—for she was a tidy body, and kent what was what—she thought she couldna do better than ask in a reputable neighbour to help her friend to eat it, and take a cheerer wi' him; as, maybe, being a stranger here, he wouldna like to use the freedom of drinking by himsel—a custom which is at the best an unsocial ane—especially wi' nane but women-folk near him, so she did me the honour to make choice of me, though I say't, wha shouldna say't; and when we got our jug filled for the second time, and began to grow better acquainted, ye would just wonder to see how we became merry, and crackit away just like twa pen-guns. I asked him, ye see, about sheep and cows, and corn and hay, and ploughing and thrashing, and horses and carts, and fallow land, and lambing-time, and har'st, and making cheese and butter, and selling eggs, and curing the sturdie, and the snifters, and the batts, and sic like; and he, in his turn, made enquiry regarding broad and narrow claith, Kilmarnock cowls, worsted comforters, Shetland hose, mittens, leather caps, stuffing and padding, metal and mule-buttons, thorls, pocket-linings, serge, twist, buckram, shaping, and sewing, back-splaying, rund-gooseing, measuring, and all the ither particulars belanging to our trade, which he said, at lang and last, after we had jokit thegither, was a power better ane than the farming.

"Ye should mak yer son ane, then," said I, "if ye think sae. Have ye ony bairns?"

"Ye've het the nail on the head. 'Od, man, if ye wasna sae far away, I would bind our auldest callant to yersel, I'm sae weel pleased wi' yer gentlemanly manners. But I'm speaking havers."

"Havers here or havers there; what," said I, "is to prevent ye boarding him, at a cheap rate, either wi' our friend Mrs Grassie, or wi' the wife? Either of the twa wad be a sort of mother till him."

"Deed, I daursay they would," an-

swered Maister Glen, stroking his chin, which was gey rough, and hadna got a clean sin' Sunday, having had four days of sheer growth—our meeting, ye'll observe by this, being on the Thursday afternoon—"'Deed would they. 'Od, I maun speak to the mistress about it."

On the head of this we had anither jug, three being cannie, after which we were baith a wee tozy-mozy; so I daursay Mrs Grassie saw plainly that we were getting into a state where we wad not easily make a halt; so, without letting on, she brought in the tea things before us, and showed us a play-bill, to tell us that a company of strolling play-actors had come in a body in the morning, with a hale cartful of scenery and grand dresses, and were to make an exhibition at seven o'clock, at the ransom of a shilling a head, in Laird Wheatley's barn.

Mony a time and often had I heard of play-acting, and of players making themselves kings and queens, and saying a great many wonderful things; but I had never before an opportunity of making mysel a witness to the truth of these hearsays. So Maister Glen being as fu' o' nonsense, and as fain to have his curiosity gratified as mysel, we took upon us the stout resolution to gang out thegither, he offering to treat me, and I determined to rin the risk of Maister Wiggie our minister's rebuke for the transgression, hoping it would make no lasting impression on his mind, being for the first and only time. Folks shouldna at a' times be ower scrupulous.

After paying our money at the door, never, while I live and breathe, will I forget what we saw and heard that night; it just looks to me, by all the world, when I think on't, like a fairy dream. The place was crowded to the full; Maister Glen and me having nearly got our ribs dung in before we fand a seat, and them behint were obliged to mount the back benches to get a sight. Right to the forehand of us was a large green curtain, some five or six ells wide, a guid deal the waur of the wear, having seen service through twa three simmers; and, just in the front of it, were eight or ten penny candles stuck in a board fastened to the ground, to let us see the players' feet like, when they came on the stage,—and even before they came on the stage,—for the curtain being scrimpit in length, we saw legs and feet moving behind the scenes very neatly; while twa blind fiddlers they had brought with them played the bonniest ye ever heard. 'Od, the very music was worth a sixpence of itsel.

The place, as I said before, was choke-full, just to excess, so that one could scarcely breathe. Indeed, I never saw ony part sae crowded, not even at a tent-preaching, when the Rev. Mr Roarer was giving his discourses on the building of Solomon's Temple. We were obligated to have the windows opened for a mouthful of fresh air, the barn being as close as a baker's oven, my neighbour and me fanning our red faces wi' our hats, to keep us cool; and, though all were half stewed, we certainly had the worst o't,—the toddy we had ta'en having fermented the blood of our bodies into a perfect fever.

Just at the time that the twa blind fiddles were playing "The Downfall of Paris," a handbell rang, and up goes the green curtain; being hauled to the ceiling, as I observed wi' the tail of my ee, by a birkie at the side, that had haud of a rope. So, on the music stopping, and all becoming as still as that you might have heard a pin fall, in comes a decent old gentleman at his leisure, weel powthered, wi' an auld fashioned coat on, waistcoat with flap-pockets, brown breeches with buckles at the knees, and silk stockings with red gushets on a blue ground. I never saw a man in sic distress; he stampit about, daddling the end of his staff on the ground, and imploring all the powers of heaven and yearth to help

him to find out his runawa' daughter, that had decampit wi' some ne'er-do-weel loon of a half-pay captain, that keppit her in his arms frae her bedroom window, up twa pair o' stairs. Every father and head of a family maun hae felt for a man in his situation, thus to be rubbit of his dear bairn, and an only daughter too, as he tell't us ower and ower again, as the saut, saut tears ran gushing down his withered face, and he aye blew his nose on his clean calendered pocket napkin. But, ye ken, the thing was absurd to suppose that we should ken onything about the matter, having never seen either him or his daughter between the een afore, and no kenning them by headmark; so though we sympathised with him, as folks ought to do wi' a fellow-creature in affliction, we thought it best to haud our tongues, to see what might cast up better than he expected. So out he gaed stumping at the ither side, determined, he said, to find them out, though he should follow them to the world's end, Johnny Groat's House, or something to that effect.

Hardly was his back turned, and amaist before ye could cry Jack Robinson, in comes the birkie and the very young leddy the auld gentleman described, arm-in-arm thegither, smoodging and lauching like daft. Dog on it! it was a shameless piece of business. As true as death, before all the crowd of folk, he pat his arm round her waist, and ca'ed her his sweatheart, and love, and dearie, and darling, and everything that is sweet. If they had been courting in a close thegither on a Friday night, they couldna hae said mair to ane anither, or gaen greater lengths. I thought sic shame to be an ee-witness to sic ongoings, that I was obliged at last to haud up my hat afore my face, and look down; though, for a' that, the young lad, to be sic a blackguard as his conduct showed, was weel enough faured, and had a gude coat to his back, wi' double-gilt buttons, and fashionable lapells, to say little of a very weel-made pair of buckskins, a little the waur o' the wear to be sure, but which, if they had been weel cleaned, would hae lookit amaist as gude as new. How they had come we never could learn, as we neither saw chaise nor gig; but, from his having spurs on his boots, it is mair than likely they had lightit at the back-door of the barn frae a horse, she riding on a pad behint him, maybe with her hand round his waist.

The faither lookit to be a rich auld bool, baith from his manner of speaking and the rewards he seemed to offer for the apprehension of his daughter; but, to be sure, when so many of us were present, that had an equal right to the spulzie, it wadna be a great deal a thousand pounds when divided, still it was worth the looking after; so we just bidit a wee.

Things were brought to a bearing, howsomever, sooner than either themsels, I daursay, or anybody else present, seemed to hae the least glimpse of; for, just in the middle of their fine goings-on, the sound of a coming fit was heard, and the lassie taking guilt to her, cried out, "Hide me, hide me, for the sake of gudeness, for yonder comes my auld faither!"

Nae sooner said than done. In he stappit her into a closet; and after shutting the door on her, he sat down upon a chair, pretending to be asleep in a moment. The auld faither came bouncing in, and seeing the fellow as sound as a tap, he ran forrit and gaed him sic a shake, as if he wad hae shooken him a' sundry, which sune made him open his een as fast as he had steekit them.

After blackguarding the chield at no allowance, cursing him up hill and down dale, and ca'ing him every name but a gentleman, he held his staff ower his crown, and gripping him by the cuff o' the neck, askit him what he had made o' his daughter. Never

since I was born did I ever see sic brazen-faced impudence. The rascal had the brass to say at ance, that he hadna seen word or wittens of his daughter for a month, though mair than a hundred folks sitting in his company had seen him dauting her with his arm round her jimpy waist not five minutes before. As a man, as a father, as an elder of our kirk, my corruption was raised,—for I aye hated leeing, as a puir cowardly sin, and an inbreak on the ten commandments; and I found my neebour, Mr Glen, fidgeting on the seat as well as me, so I thocht that whaever spoke first wad hae the best right to be entitled to the reward; whereupon, just as he was in the act of rising up, I took the word out of his mouth, saying, "Dinna believe him, auld gentleman—dinna believe him, friend; he's telling a parcel of lees. Never saw her for a month! It's no worth arguing, or ca'ing witnesses; just open that press door, and ye'll see whether I'm speaking truth or no."

The auld man stared, and lookit dumfoundered; and the young man, instead of rinnin' forrit wi' his doubled nieves to strike me—the only thing I was feared for—began a lauching, as if I had dune him a gude turn. But never since I had a being, did ever I witness sic an uproar and noise as immediately took place. The hale house was sae glad that the scoundrel had been exposed, that they set up siccan a roar o' lauchter, and they thumpit away at siccan a rate at the boards wi' their feet, that at lang and last, wi' pushing and fidgeting, clapping their hands, and hadding their sides, down fell the place they ca' the gallery, a' the folk in't being hurled tapsy-turvy, head foremost amang the sawdust on the floor below; their guffawing sune being turned to howling, ilka ane crying louder than anither at the tap of their voices, "Murder! Murder! haud aff me. Murder, my ribs are in. Murder! I'm killed—I'm speechless!" and ither lamentations to that effect; so that a rush to the door took place, in which everything was overturned—the door-keeper being wheeled away like wild-fire; the furms strampit to pieces; the lights knockit out; and the twa blind fiddlers dung head foremost ower the stage, the bass fiddle cracking like thunder at every bruise. Siccan tearing and swearing, and tumbling and squealing, was never witnessed in the memory of man, since the building of Babel; legs being likely to be broken, sides staved in, een knocked out, and lives lost; there being only one door, and that a sma' ane; so that, when we had been carried aff our feet that length, my wind was fairly gane, and a sick dwalm cam ower me, lights of a' manner of colours, red, blue, green, and orange, dancing before me, that entirely deprived me o' my common sense, till on opening my een in the dark, I fand myself leaning wi' my braid side against the wa' on the opposite side of the close. It was some time before I mindit what had happened; so, dreading scaith, I fand first the ae arm, and then the ither, to see if they were broken—syne my head—and syne baith o' my legs; but a' as weel as I could discover was skin-hale and scart-free; on perceiving which, my joy was without bounds, having a great notion that I had been killed on the spot. So I reached round my hand very thankfully to tak out my pocket napkin, to gie my brow a wipe, when, lo and behold, the tail of my Sunday's coat was fairly aff an' away—dockit by the hench buttons.

Sae muckle for plays and play-actors—the first and last, I trust in grace, that I shall ever see. But indeed I could expect nae better, after the warning that Maister Wiggie had mair than ance gien us frae the puppit on the subject; sae, instead of getting my grand reward for finding the auld man's daughter, the hale covey o' them, nae better than a set of swindlers, took leg-

bail, and made that very night a moonlight flitting, and Johnny Hammer, honest man, that had wrought frae sunrise to sunset, for twa days, fitting up their place by contract, instead of being well paid for his trouble, as he deserved, got naething left him but a rackle of his own gude deals, a' dung to shivers.

JANE MALCOLM:

A VILLAGE TALE.

EVERY town in Scotland has its "character," in the shape of some bedlamite, innocent, or odd fish. There is something interesting about these out-of-the-way beings. Everything they do is a kind of current chapter of biography among their neighbours;—what they say is regarded as the words of an oracle—more worthy of memory than the inquiries of the laird or the advice of the parson. They are in a manner immortalised.

Having, in the course of different summers, taken up a short residence in some of the smaller borough towns and villages scattered through Scotland, I took no small delight in observing the peculiarities of many of those objects of compassion, and in tracing the source of that dismal malady which laid prostrate the edifice of reason, and arrested the harmonious mechanism of an organized mind. The task was sometimes of a melancholy nature: I found histories—real histories—turning upon incidents the most tragical, and only wonder they are so little known, and meet with such slender sympathy. The crisis of a well-written romance brings out more tears than were ever shed for the fall of man; but never have I read of anything so pathetic as was developed in the following sketch—a sketch which the pen of a Scott could do little to adorn. The naked truth of the story is a series of catastrophes, a parallel to which imagination seldom produces. It was told me by a sister of the unfortunate female who figures so conspicuously in it.

Jane Malcolm was the daughter of a lint-mill proprietor in the small town of K———n. Her father, being a wealthy man, held for a long time the provostship of the place—a Scottish burgh. His family consisted of two daughters and a son. Jane was the youngest of these, and her father's favourite. There was something about the girl extremely attractive; she possessed all the advantages of personal beauty, combined with a gentleness of disposition and quickness of understanding, that wrought upon the affections of all she knew. At the manse she was peculiarly beloved; the good old minister recognised in her the image of one he had lost; the illusion strengthened as she grew up, and Jane Malcolm was as much an inmate there as she was in the house of her father. A few years saw her removed to Edinburgh, to finish an education imperfectly carried on under the superintendence of a village governess. She returned graceful and accomplished, to be looked up to by all her former companions. But Jane was not proud;—her early friendships she disdained to supplant by a feeling so unworthy—so unlike herself. Her over-bending nature, indeed, was her fault: it brought the vulgar and undiscerning mind into too much familiarity with her own. It became the cause of all her misery.

Among those most intimate with her was one Margaret Innes, a young and lively girl, but far below Jane's rank in life. The daughter of an aged fisherman, it was not uncommon for Jane to find her employed in offices the most menial. For all this she loved her not the less. The affection and humble virtues of Margaret amply repaid Jane for her condescension. Mr Malcolm himself saw no harm in this growing friendship, marked, as it was, with such a strong disparity of situation. But he overlooked the circumstance that Margaret Innes had a brother, a handsome, fearless lad. A sailor by profession, it is true he was seldom at home, but though seldom, he was often enough for Jane to discover that his every return brought with it a stronger impression in his favour. When very young they were play-fellows together, and now when both were grown up, she could not refuse a smile or a word, whenever, after a long voyage, the light-hearted sailor returned to his native home. Sandy felt vain of her notice, but by no means attempted more familiarity than was consistent with his station. Without daring to love, he would have done anything to serve Miss Malcolm, and his readiness was not unfrequently put to the test.

Nothing Jane loved better than a short excursion upon the neighbouring sea. The boat of the old fisherman was often in request for this purpose, and he himself, accompanied by his daughter Margaret, made up the party on these occasions. When Sandy was at home, he supplied the place of his father, and his active and skilful hand directed many a pleasant voyage—made more pleasant by a fund of amusing anecdotes and adventures picked up in the course of his travels. One afternoon, on the day after his return from the coast of Norway, this little group had embarked to enjoy the delightful freshness of the sea-breeze, after a noon of intolerable heat. Standing up to gaze at a flock of sea-birds, collected for the purpose of devouring the small fry of the herring which at that season visited the coast, Jane Malcolm accidentally fell into the water. The boat receded rapidly from the spot, its sail being filled by the wind. Immediately, however, Sandy Innes swam towards the terrified girl. She clung to him for support. It was no easy matter to reach the boat, carried along as it was by the breeze, and not till Margaret had recovered from her first alarm, was she able, by turning the helm, to give them the required assistance. They were soon safe. This adventure called forth the liveliest feelings of gratitude on the part of Jane Malcolm. She regarded the youthful sailor as her preserver, and thought no recompense too liberal for the service he had rendered. Imprudently she revealed to his sister the secret of her growing attachment. Margaret was too generous all at once to give her brother the advantage offered. She reasoned with Jane on the impropriety—the unsuitableness of such a union as was hinted at; and, to render it impracticable for the present, she induced Sandy to engage with a ship bound for North America. Accordingly, he again left the country.

Miss Malcolm was not to be deterred. She upbraided Margaret for her want of feeling; and, in short, took it so much to heart, that the poor girl, on Sandy's return, was, out of self-defence, obliged to communicate to him the tidings she willingly would have hid. To be brief, they were married without Mr Malcolm's consent. This was a blow the old man never got over; he died a few days after the ceremony. His only son had just returned from England, a lieutenant in the army; alas! it was to lay in the grave the remains of a heart-broken father. Enraged at the cause of this melancholy blow, he vowed revenge against the innocent intruder into his

domestic peace. The feelings of his unhappy sister he thought no sacrifice to win retaliation; the step she had already taken showed them, in his eye, to be blunted and incapable of injury. To have challenged one so much his inferior never entered into his mind; he brooded over a purpose more dark and sanguinary, though less consistent with his honour. His design was to have the husband of his sister murdered, and he appears to have formed it without a moment's hesitation. Professing regard for his new brother-in-law, he pretended to be reconciled to the unfortunate marriage, and even divided with him and his other sister the patrimony of the deceased. This show of friendship had the effect of producing a seeming intimacy between them. Many a time they went out for a few hours upon fishing excursions, without any discovery being made by Sandy Innes of the growing hostility harboured by young Malcolm. One evening, however—the latter having, by various excuses, delayed their return to shore till after sunset—as the boat was lying quietly at anchor, about a mile from harbour, the unsuspecting sailor leant over to recover an oar which Malcolm had purposely dropped, when he found himself suddenly precipitated into the sea. In attempting to regain the vessel, he was driven back, and violently struck with the boat-hook, which his villanous brother-in-law had seized, with the intent to put the finish to his murderous treachery. In this, however, he was disappointed. Sandy Innes, with strong presence of mind, caught hold of the instrument, managing, at the same time, to overset the boat, and thus involve Malcolm in the same fate with himself. Both had a hard struggle for life; but alas! without success. Next morning the bodies of the two young men were discovered lying upon the beach. They were carried into Jane's habitation without her knowledge—the unfortunate girl having gone out to a different part of the shore in quest of the boat, which, she fancied, had, by the wish of her brother, harboured all night at Inchkeith. When she returned, the first object that met her eyes was the body of her own dear husband—a cold corpse, with the long black hair hanging down over his once noble brow, and the dark eyes wide open, as if fixed in death upon her and heaven. A few days afterwards the young men were buried, side by side,—for a fearful story was whispered of Malcolm's guilt: how he was seen by the crew of a boat that had landed, without notice, upon a neighbouring rock, at the moment he attempted the atrocious deed. Their assistance, though instantly offered, was too late, for both had gone down ere they reached the spot.

After that sad catastrophe Jane was never herself. A fever carried away her intellects, and left her mind in ruins. Though possessed of a competency, it has never been used. The same weeds, though now reduced to rags, still cover her in her long and sorrowful widowhood. The last time I saw her, I saw a fearful picture—a beautiful female altered to a revolting spectacle of squalidness and deformity. She was gathering shell-fish from among the brown layers of tangle, beyond the farthest ebb of the tide. Now and then she broke the shells with her teeth, muttering,—"We shall find him here—we shall find him here;" and then she threw the shells round about her, with a sad sigh, as if her heart were longing to break, but felt chained up in a lone and weary prison. As I passed, I called to her—"Jane, this is a cold day, and you seem at cold work." "Ay! ay!" she replied, "and so are the worms! But did ye see him? Bonny Sandy! If ye be gaun to the town, tell Meg Innes to come; for he's a wild laddie, and maybe she'll ken whaur he's hidden himsel!" Poor creature, thought I, she will find rest in the grave!—*Edin. Lit. Jour.*

BOWED JOSEPH:

A LAST-CENTURY EDINBURGH "CHARACTER."

By Robert Chambers, LL.D.

The mobs of Edinburgh have ever been celebrated as among the fiercest in Europe. The one which accomplished the death of Porteous, as narrated in the tale of the Heart of Midlothian, was a most surprising instance of popular vengeance, almost surpassing the bounds of belief; though it must sink considerably in our admiration, when we reflect upon the power and ferocity which at all periods have characterised the actions of this monstrous and danger-fraught collective. The time has been, when, in the words of the old song, "all Edinburgh" would "rise by thousands three," and present such a strength to the legal authorities, that all opposition to their capricious will would be in vain. In the younger days of many now living, even the boys of the High School, and of Heriot's Hospital, could erect themselves into a formidable body, equally resistless and indomitable. It is a fact, ludicrous enough too, that when the lads of these different schools were engaged in any of those squabbles, formerly so frequent and fatal, between them, they always showed a singular degree of political sagacity when assailed by the town-guard, in immediately joining their strengths, and combining against the common foe, when for the most part they succeeded in driving them from the scene of action. When such was the power of boys and striplings in this ill-protected city, and such the disorderliness of holiday assemblies, there is little left for wonder at the ravages committed by a mob formed of adults, actuated by violent feelings of jealousy, bigotry, and revenge.

Of this uncontrollable omnipotence of the populace, the annals of Edinburgh present many fearful records. At the various periods of the Reformation and the Revolution, the Chapel of Roslin was destroyed by a mob, whose purpose neither cooled nor evaporated during a walk of eight miles. James the Sixth was besieged and threatened in his courts, and in the midst of his Parliaments, by a rabble of mechanics, who, but for the stout walls of the Tolbooth, might perhaps have taken his life. The fine chapel of Holyrood-house was pillaged of not only its furniture and other valuables, but also of the still more sacred bones which lay within its precincts, by a mob which rose at the Revolution, and did such deeds of violence and rapine as fanaticism and ignorance alone could have excited. At the unfortunate issue of the Dover expedition, at the execution of Captain Green, at the Union, and at many other events of less importance, the populace of Edinburgh distinguished themselves by insurrection and acts of outrage, such as have alone found parallels, perhaps, in the various transactions of the French Revolution. Even so late as 1812, there happened a foray of a most appalling nature; the sports of an occasion of rejoicing were converted into scenes of frightful riot, unexampled as they were unlooked for. The fatal melancholy catastrophe of this event, had, however, the good effect of quenching the spirit of licentiousness and blackguardism in the Edinburgh youth, and finally undermined that system of unity and promptitude in action and in council by which its mobs had so often triumphed in their terrible resolutions.

In this fierce democracy, there once arose a mighty leader, who contrived, by means of great boldness, sagacity, and other personal merits, to subject the

rabble to his will, and to elect himself dictator of all its motives and exploits. The person who thus found means to collect all the monstrous heads of the hydra within the grand grasp of his command was a little decrepit being, about four feet high, almost deprived of legs, and otherwise deformed. His name was Joseph Smith, or more commonly, "Bowed Joseph." He lived in Leith Wynd, and his trade as a private citizen was a buff belt maker. This singular being—low, miserable, and contemptible as he appeared—might be said to have had at one time the complete command of the metropolis of Scotland. Whenever any transaction took place in the Town Council which Joseph considered to be of very improper tendency; whenever meal rose to whatever Joseph considered to be an improper price; whenever anything occurred in the city which did not accord with Joseph's idea of right and wrong; in short, "when they werna gude bairns," this hero could, in the course of an hour, collect a mob of ten thousand persons, all alike ready to execute his commands, or to disperse at his bidding. For this purpose, he is said to have employed a drum; and never surely had "fiery cross" of the Highland cheftain such an effect upon the warlike devotion of his clan, as "Bowed Joseph's drum" had upon the *tinder* spirits of the Edinburgh rabble.

The "lazy corner" was a lazy corner no longer as he marched along—the "town rats," as they peeped forth like old cautious snails from their Patmos in the High Street, drew in their horns and shut their door as he approached—the West Bow ceased to clink as he descended. It seemed to be their enthusiasm to obey him in every order—whether to sack a granary, break the windows of an offensive magistrate, or to besiege the Town Council in their chamber. With all this absolute dominion over the affections and obedience of the mob, it is to be recorded to the honour of Bowed Joseph, that however irregular the nature of his authority, he never in any of his actions could be said to have transgressed the bounds of propriety. With great natural sagacity, he possessed a clear and quick-sighted faculty of judgment. And the real philanthropy of his disposition was not less remarkable than his other singular qualities. He was, in short, an advocate for "fair play," as he called it, in everything. Fair play alone was the object of his government, and nothing else.

The following interesting story is handed down concerning Bowed Joseph, which proves his strong love of justice, as well as the humanity of his heart. A poor man in the Pleasance, from certain untoward circumstances, found it impossible to pay his rent at Martinmas; and his hard-hearted landlord, refusing a portion of the same with a forlorn promise of the remainder being soon paid, sold off the whole effects of the tenant, and threw him, with a family of six children, in the most miserable condition upon the wide world. The unfortunate man, in a fit of despair, immediately put an end to his existence, by which the family were only rendered still more destitute. Bowed Joseph, however, did not long remain ignorant of the case. As soon as the affair became generally known throughout the city, he shouldered his drum, and after half-an-hour's beating through the streets, found himself followed by a mob of ten thousand people. With this enormous army he marched to an open space of ground, named in former times Thomson's Park, where, mounted on the shoulders of six of his lieutenant-generals, he harangued them in the true "Cambyses vein," concerning the flagrant and fatal proceedings for the redress of which they were assembled. He concluded by directing his men to seek the premises of the cruel landlord; and as his house lay directly opposite the spot in the Pleasance, there was no time lost in executing his orders. The mob entered.

and seized upon every article of furniture that could be found, and in ten minutes the whole was packed in the park. Joseph set fire to the pile with his own hands, though the magistrates stood by with a guard of soldiers, and entreated him to desist. The eight-day clock is said to have struck twelve just as it was consigned to the flames.

When such was the strength and organisation of an Edinburgh mob so late as the year 1780, we need scarcely be surprised at the instance on which the tale of the Heart of Midlothian is founded, happening, as it did, at a much earlier period, and when the people were prompted to their terrible purpose by the sternest feelings of personal revenge.

In the exercise of his perilous office, it does not appear that Bowed Joseph ever drew down the vengeance of the more lawfully constituted authorities of the land. He was, on the contrary, in some degree countenanced by the magistrates of the city, who frequently sent for him to the Council Chamber, in cases of emergency, to consult him on the best means to be adopted for appeasing and dispersing the mob.

On an occasion of this moment, he was accustomed to look very large and consequential. With one hand carelessly applied to his side, and the other banged resolutely down upon the table, and with as much majesty as four feet of stature, and a beard of as many weeks old, could assume, and with as much turbulence in his fiery little eye, as if he was himself a mob, he would stand before them pleading the cause of his compeers, or directing the trembling Council to the most expeditious method of assuaging their fury. The dismissal of a mob, on these occasions, was usually accomplished at the expense of a few hogsheads of ale, broached on the Calton Hill, and by the subsequent order of their decrepit general, expressed in the simple words, "Disperse, my lads."

Having for many years exercised an unlimited dominion over the affections of the rabble, Bowed Joseph met his death at last in a manner most unworthy of his character and great reputation. He fell from the top of a Leith coach in a state of intoxication, and broke his neck, which caused instantaneous death. He had been at the Leith races, and was on his return to Edinburgh when the accident took place; and his skeleton has the honour of being preserved in the anatomical class-room of the College of Edinburgh.

An Edinburgh mob, although it may supply excellent subjects for tales, in all its characteristic fierceness and insubordination, is now a matter of mere antiquity. In the present day, the working classes of Edinburgh, from whom it may be supposed the principal materials of the mobs used to be drafted, are in the highest degree orderly, both in private conduct, and in their public appearances in bodies. The printing press, the schoolmaster, and that general improvement of manners which now prevails, have entirely altered the character of the populace, and any mischief now committed through the public uproar is seen to arise not from the adult, but the juvenile and neglected portion of the community.

THE LAIRD OF WINEHOLM.

By James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd."

"Have you heard anything of the apparition which has been seen about Wincholm-place?" said the dominie.

"Na, I never heard o' sic a thing, as yet," quoth the smith; "but I wadna wonder muckle that the news should turn out to be true."

The dominie shook his head, and muttered, "h'm—h'm—h'm," as if he knew more than he was at liberty to tell.

"Weel, that beats the world," said the smith, as he gave up blowing the bellows, and looked over the spectacles at the dominie's face.

The dominie shook his head again.

The smith was now in the most ticklish quandary; eager to learn particulars, and spread the astounding news through the whole village, and the rest of the parish to boot, but yet afraid to press the inquiry, for fear the cautious dominie should take the alarm of being reported as a tattler, and keep all to himself. So the smith, after waiting till the windpipe of the great bellows ceased its rushing noise, and he had covered the gloss neatly up with a mixture of small coals, culm, and cinders; and then, perceiving that nothing more was forthcoming from the dominie, he began blowing again with more energy than before—changed his hand—put the other sooty one into his breeches-pocket—leaned to the horn—looked in a careless manner towards the window, or rather gazed on vacancy, and always now and then stole a sly look at the dominie's face. It was quite immovable. His cheek was leaned upon his open hand, and his eyes fixed on the glowing fire.

It was very teasing for poor Clinkum, the smith. But what could he do? He took out his glowing iron, and made a shower of fire sweep through the whole smithy, whereof a good part, as intended, sputtered upon the dominie, but he only shielded his face with his elbow, turned his shoulder half round and held his peace. Thump—thump! clink—clink! went the hammer for a space; and then, when the iron was returned to the fire, "Weel, that beats the world!" quoth the smith.

"What is this that beats the world, Mr Clinkum?" said the dominie, with the most cool and provoking indifference.

"This story about the apparition," quoth the smith.

"What story?" said the dominie.

Now, really this insolence was hardly to be borne, even from the learned dominie, who, with all his cold indifference of feeling, was sitting toasting himself at a good smithy fire. The smith felt this, for he was a man of acute feeling, and therefore he spit upon his hand and fell a-clinking and pelting at the stithy with both spirit and resignation, saying within himself, "These dominie bodies just beat the world!"

"What story?" reiterated the dominie. "For my part I related no story, nor have ever given assent to a belief in such story that any man has heard. Nevertheless, from the results of ratiocination, conclusions may be formed, though not algebraically, yet corporately by constituting a quantity, which shall be equivalent to the difference, subtracting the less from the greater, and striking a balance in order to get rid of any ambiguity or paradox."

At the long adverb, *nevertheless*, the smith gave over blowing, and pricked up his ears, but the definition went beyond his comprehension.

"Ye ken that just beats the whole

world for deepness," said the smith, and again began blowing the bellows.

"You know, Mr Clinkum," continued the dominie, "that a proposition is an assertion of some distinct truth, which only becomes manifest by demonstration. A corollary is an obvious, or easily inferred consequence *of* a proposition; while a hypothesis is a *supposition*, or concession made, during the process of demonstration. Now, do you take me along with you? Because, if you do not, it is needless to proceed."

"Yes, yes, I understand you middling weel; but I wad like better to hear what other folks say about it than you."

"And why so? Wherefore would you rather hear another man's demonstration than mine?" said the dominie, sternly.

"Because, ye ken, ye just beat the world for words," quoth the smith.

"Ay, ay! that is to say, words without wisdom," said the dominie, rising and stepping away. "Well, well, every man to his sphere, and the smith to his bellows."

"Ye're quite wrang, maister," cried the smith after him. "It isna the *want* o' wisdom in you that plagues me; it is the owerplush o't."

This soothed the dominie, who returned, and said mildly,—

"By-the-by, Clinkum, I want a leister of your making, for I see no other tradesman makes them so well. A five-grained one make it; at your own price."

"Very weel, sir. When will you be needing it?"

"Not till the end of the close time."

"Ay, ye may gar the three auld anes do till then."

"What do you wish to insinuate, sir? Would you infer, because I have three leisters, that therefore I am a breaker of the laws? That I, who am placed here as a pattern and monitor of the young and rising generation, should be the first to set them an example of insubordination?"

"Ye ken, that just beats a' in words; but we ken what we ken, for a' that, maister."

"You had better take a little care what you say, Mr Clinkum; just a *little* care. I do not request you to take particular care, for of that your tongue is incapable, but a very little is a correlative of consequences. And mark you—don't go to say that I said this or that about a ghost, or mentioned such a ridiculous story."

"The crabbitness o' that body beats the world!" said the smith to himself, as the dominie went halting homeward.

The very next man who entered the smithy door was no other than John Broadcast, the new laird's hind, who had also been hind to the late laird for many years, and who had no sooner said his errand, than the smith addressed him thus:—

"Have *you* ever seen this ghost that there is such a noise about?"

"Ghost? Na, goodness be thankit! I never saw a ghost in my life, save ance a wraith. What ghost do you mean?"

"So you never saw nor heard tell of any apparition about Wincholm-place, lately?"

"No, I hae reason to be thankfu' I have not."

"Weel, that beats the world! Wow, man, but ye are sair in the dark! Do you no think there are siccan things in nature, as folk no coming fairly to their ends, John?"

"Goodness be wi' us! Ye gar a' the hairs o' my head creep, man. What's that you're saying?"

"Had ye never ony suspicions o' that kind, John?"

"No; I canna say that I had."

"None in the least? Weel, that beats the world!"

"O, haud your tongue—haud your

tongue! We hae great reason to be thankfu' that we are as we are!"

"How as you are?"

"That we are nae stocks or stanes, or brute beasts, as the minister o' Traquair says. But I hope in God there is nae siccan a thing about my master's place as an unearthly visitor."

The smith shook his head, and uttered a long hem! hem! hem! He had felt the powerful effect of that himself, and wished to make the same appeal to the feelings and longings after information of John Broadcast. The bait took; for the latent spark of superstition was kindled in the heart of honest John, and there being no wit in the head to counteract it, the portentous hint had its full sway. John's eyes stelled in his head, and his visage grew long, assuming meanwhile something of the hue of dried clay in winter.

"Hech, man! but that's an awsome story," exclaimed he. "Folks hae great reason to be thankfu' that they are as they are. It is truly an awsome story."

"Ye ken, it just beats the world for that," rejoined the smith.

"And is it really thought that this laird made away wi' our auld maister?" said John.

The smith shook his head again, and gave a straight wink with his eyes.

"Weel, I hae great reason to be thankfu' that I never heard siccan a story as that!" said John. "Wha was it tauld you a' about it?"

"It was nae less a man than our mathewmatical dominie," said the smith, "he that kens a' things, and can prove a proposition to the nineteenth part of a hair. But he is terrified lest the tale should spread; and therefore ye maunna say a word about it."

"Na, na; I hae great reason to be thankfu' I can keep a secret as weel as the maist part of men, and better than the maist part of women. What did he say? Tell us a' that he said."

"It is not so easy to repeat what he says, for he has sae mony lang-nebbit words. But he said, though it was only a supposition, yet it was easily made manifest by positive demonstration."

"Did you ever hear the like o' that? Now, have we no reason to be thankfu' that we are as we are? Did he say it was by poison that he was taken off, or that he was strangled?"

"Na; I thought he said it was by a collar, or collary, or something to that purpose."

"Then it wad appear there is no doubt of the horrid transaction? I think the doctor has reason to be thankfu' that he's no taken up. Is no that strange?"

"O, ye ken, it just beats the world."

"He deserves to be torn at young horses' tails," said the ploughman.

"Ay, or nippit to death wiin red-hot pinchers," quoth the smith.

"Or harrowed to death, like the children of Ammon," said the ploughman.

"Na, I'll tell you what should be done wi' him—he should just be docked, and fired like a farcied horse," quoth the smith. "'Od help ye, man, I could beat the world for laying on a proper punishment!"

John Broadcast went home full of terror and dismay. He told his wife the story in a secret—she told the dairymaid with a tenfold degree of secrecy; and as Dr Davington, or the New Laird, as he was called, sometimes kissed the pretty dairymaid for amusement, it gave her a great deal of freedom with her master, so she went straight and told him the whole story to his face. He was unusually affected at hearing such a terrible accusation against himself, and changed colour again and again; and as pretty Martha, the dairymaid, supposed it was from anger, she fell to abusing the dominie without mercy—for he was session-clerk, and had been giving her some hints about her morality of which she did not approve. She

therefore threw the whole blame upon him, assuring her master that he was the most spiteful and malicious man on the face of the earth; "and to show you that, sir," added Martha, wiping her eyes, "he has spread it through the hale parish that you and I baith deserve to sit wi' the sacking-gown on us."

This enraged the doctor still farther, and he forthwith dispatched Martha to desire the dominie to come up to the Place to speak with her master, as he had something to say to him. Martha went, and delivered her message in so insulting a manner, that the dominie suspected there was bad blood a-brewing against him; and as he had too much self-importance to think of succumbing to any man alive, he sent an impertinent answer to the laird's message, bearing that if Dr Davington had any business with him, he would be so good as attend at his class-room when he dismissed his scholars. And then he added, waving his hand towards the door, "Go out. There is contamination in your presence. What hath such a vulgar fraction ado to come into the halls of uprightness and science?"

When this message was delivered, the doctor, being almost beside himself with rage, instantly dispatched two village constables with a warrant to seize the dominie, and bring him before him, for the doctor was a justice of the peace. Accordingly, the poor dominie was seized at the head of his pupils, and dragged away, crutch and all, up before the new laird, to answer for such an abominable slander. The dominie denied everything anent it, as indeed he might, save having asked the smith the simple question, "if he had heard aught of a ghost at the Place?" But he refused to tell *why* he had asked that question. He had his own reasons for it, he said, and reasons that to him were quite sufficient; but as he was not obliged to disclose them, neither would he.

The smith was then sent for, who declared that the dominie had told him of the ghost being seen, and a murder committed, which he called a *rash assassination*, and said it was obvious and easily inferred that it was done by a collar.

How the dominie did storm! He even twice threatened to knock down the smith with his crutch; not for the slander,—he cared not for that nor the doctor a pin, but for the total subversion of his grand illustration from geometry; and he, therefore, denominated the smith's head *the logarithm to number one*, a reproach of which I do not understand the gist, but the appropriation of it pleased the dominie exceedingly, made him chuckle, and put him in better humour for a good while. It was in vain that he tried to prove that his words applied only to the definition of a problem in geometry,—he could not make himself understood; and the smith maintaining his point firmly, and apparently with conscientious truth, appearances were greatly against the dominie, and the doctor pronounced him a malevolent and dangerous person.

"O, ye ken, he just beats the world for that," quoth the smith.

"I a malevolent and dangerous person, sir!" said the dominie, fiercely, and altering his crutch from one place to another of the floor, as if he could not get a place to set it on. "Dost thou call me a malevolent and dangerous person, sir? what, then, art thou? If thou knowest not, I will tell thee. Add a cipher to a ninth figure, and what does that make? Ninety you will say. Ay, but then put a cipher *above* a nine, and what does that make? Ha—ha—ha—I have you there! Your case exactly in higher geometry! For say the chord of sixty degrees is radius, then the sine of ninety degrees is equal to the radius, so the secant of 0 (that is nihil-nothing, as the boys call it), is radius, and so is the co-sine of 0. The

versed sine of ninety degrees is radius (that is nine with a cipher added, you know), and the versed sine of 180 degrees is the diameter; then, of course, the sine increases from nought (that is, cipher or nothing) till it becomes radius, and then it decreases till it becomes nothing. After this you note it lies on the *contrary* side of the diameter, and consequently, if positive before, is negative now; so that it must end in 0, or a cipher above a nine at most."

"This unintelligible jargon is out of place here, Mr Dominie; and if you can show no better reasons for raising such an abominable falsehood, in representing me as an incendiary and murderer, I shall procure you a lodging in the house of correction."

"Why, sir, the long and the short of the matter is this:—I only asked at that fellow there—that logarithm of stupidity—if he had heard aught of a ghost having been seen about Wincholm Place. I added nothing farther, either positive or negative. Now, do you insist on my reasons for asking such a question?"

"I insist on having them."

"Then what will you say, sir, when I inform you, and declare my readiness to depone to the truth of it, that I saw the ghost myself? Yes, sir, that I saw the ghost of your late worthy father-in-law myself, sir; and though I said no such thing to that decimal fraction, yet it told me, sir,—yes, the spirit of your father-in-law told me, sir, that you are a murderer."

"Lord, now, what think ye o' that?" quoth the smith. "Ye had better hae letten him alane; for, 'od, ye ken, he's the deevil of a body as ever was made. He just beats the world!"

The doctor grew as pale as death, but whether from fear or rage, it was hard to say.

"Why, sir," said he, "you are mad! stark, raving mad; therefore, for your own credit, and for the peace and comfort of my wife and myself, and our credit among our retainers, you must unsay every word that you have now said."

"I'll just as soon say that the parabola and the ellipsis are the same," said the dominie; "or that the diameter is not the longest line that can be drawn in the circle. And now, sir, since you have forced me to divulge what I was much in doubt about, I have a great mind to have the old laird's grave opened to-night, and have the body inspected before witnesses."

"If you dare disturb the sanctuary of the grave," said the doctor vehemently, "or with your unhallowed hands touch the remains of my venerable and revered predecessor, it had been better for you, and all who make the attempt, that you never had been born. If not then for my sake, for the sake of my wife, the sole daughter of the man to whom you have all been obliged, let this abominable and malicious calumny go no farther, but put it down; I pray of you to put it down, as you would value your own advantage."

"I have seen him, and spoke with him—that I aver," said the dominie. "And shall I tell you what he said to me?"

"No, no! I'll hear no more of such absolute and disgusting nonsense," said the doctor.

"Then, since it hath come to this, I will declare it in the face of the whole world, and pursue it to the last," said the dominie, "ridiculous as it is, and I confess that it is even so. I have seen your father-in-law within the last twenty-four hours; at least a being in his form and habiliments, and having his aspect and voice. And he told me that he believed you were a very great scoundrel, and that you had helped him off the stage of time in a great haste, for fear of the operation of a will, which he had just executed, very much to your prejudice. I was somewhat aghast, but

ventured to remark, that he must surely have been sensible whether you murdered him or not, and in what way. He replied that he was not very certain, for at the time you put him down, he was much in his customary way of nights—very drunk; but that he greatly suspected you had hanged him, for ever since he had died, he had been troubled with a severe crick in his neck. Having seen my late worthy patron's body deposited in the coffin, and afterwards consigned to the grave, these things overcame me, and a kind of mist came over my senses; but I heard him saying as he withdrew, what a pity it was that my nerves could not stand this disclosure! Now, for my own satisfaction, I am resolved that, to-morrow, I shall raise the village, with the two ministers at the head of the multitude, and have the body, and particularly the neck of the deceased, minutely inspected."

"If you do so, I shall make one of the number," said the doctor. "But I am resolved that, in the first place, every means shall be tried to prevent a scene of madness and absurdity so disgraceful to a well-regulated village and a sober community."

"There is but one direct line that can be followed, and any other would either form an acute or obtuse angle," said the dominie; "therefore I am resolved to proceed right forward, on mathematical principles;" and away he went, skipping on his crutch, to arouse the villagers to the scrutiny.

The smith remained behind, concerting with the doctor how to controvert the dominie's profound scheme of unshrouding the dead; and certainly the smith's plan, viewed professionally, was not amiss—

"O, ye ken, sir, we maun just gie him another heat, and try to saften him to reason, for he's just as stubborn as Muirkirk airn. He beats the world for that."

While the two were in confabulation, Johnston, the old house servant, came in, and said to the doctor—

"Sir, your servants are going to leave the house, every one, this night, if you cannot fall on some means to divert them from it. The old laird is, it seems, risen again, and come back among them, and they are all in the utmost consternation. Indeed, they are quite out of their reason. He appeared in the stable to Broadcast, who has been these two hours dead with terror, but is now recovered, and telling such a tale downstairs as never was heard from the mouth of man."

"Send him up here," said the doctor. "I will silence him. What does the ignorant clown mean by joining in this unnatural clamour?"

John came up, with his broad bonnet in his hand, shut the door with hesitation, and then felt thrice with his hand if it was really shut.

"Well, John," said the doctor, "what absurd lie is this that you are vending among your fellow-servants, of having seen a ghost?"

John picked some odds and ends of threads out of his bonnet, and said nothing.

"You are an old superstitious dreaming dotard," continued the doctor; "but if you propose in future to manufacture such stories, you must, from this instant, do it somewhere else than in my service, and among my domestics. What have you to say for yoursell?"

"Indeed, sir, I hae naething to say but this, that we hae a' muckle reason to be thankfu' that we are as we are."

"And whereon does that wise saw bear? What relation has that to the seeing of a ghost? Confess then, this instant, that you have forged and vended a deliberate lie."

"Indeed, sir, I hae muckle reason to be thankfu'—"

"For what?"

"That I never tauld a deliberate lie in my life. My late master came and

spoke to me in the stable; but whether it was his ghaist or himself—a good angel or a bad ane—I hae reason to be thankfu' I never said; for I *do—not—ken.*"

"Now, pray let us hear from that sage tongue of yours, so full of sublime adages, what this doubtful being said to you?"

"I wad rather be excused, an' it were your honour's will, and wad hae reason to be thankfu'."

"And why should you decline telling this?"

"Because I ken ye wadna believe a word o't, it is siccan a strange story. O, sirs, but folks hae muckle reason to be thankful that they are as they are!"

"Well, out with this strange story of yours. I do not promise to credit it, but shall give it a patient hearing, providing you swear that there is no forgery in it."

"Weel, as I was suppering the horses the night, I was dressing my late kind master's favourite mare, and I was just thinking to mysel, an' he had been leevving, I wadna hae been my lane the night, for he wad hae been standing ower me, cracking his jokes, and swearing at me in his good-natured hamely way. Ay, but he's gane to his lang account, thinks I, and we puir frail dying creatures that are left ahint, hae muckle reason to be thankfu' that we are as we are; when I looks up, and behold there's my auld master standing leaning against the trivage as he used to do, and looking at me. I canna but say my heart was a little astoundit, and maybe lap up through my midriff into my breath-bellows—I couldna say; but in the strength o' the Lord I was enabled to retain my senses for a good while. 'John Broadcast,' said he, with a deep angry tone,—'John Broadcast, what the d—l are you thinking about? You are not currying that mare half. What lubberly way of dressing a horse is that?'

"'Lord make us thankfu', master,' says I; 'are you there?'

"'Where else would you have me be at this hour of the night, old blockhead?' says he.

"'In another hame than this, master,' says I; 'but I fear it is nae good ane, that ye are sae soon tired o't.'

"'A d—d bad one, I assure you,' says he.

"'Ay, but master,' says I, 'ye hae muckle reason to be thankfu' that ye are as ye are.'

"'In what respect, dotard?' says he.

"'That ye hae liberty to come out o't a start now and then to get the air,' says I; and oh, my heart was sair for him when I thought o' his state! And though I was thankfu' that I was as I was, my heart and flesh began to fail me, at thinking of my speaking face to face wi' a being frae the unhappy place. But out he breaks again wi' a great round o' swearing, about the mare being ill-keepit; and he ordered me to cast my coat and curry her weel, for he had a lang journey to take on her the morn.

"'You take a journey on her!' says I; 'I doubt my new master will dispute that privilege wi' you, for he rides her himsel the morn.'

"'He ride her!' cried the angry spirit; and then he burst out into a lang string of imprecations, fearsome to hear, against you, sir; and then added, 'Soon, soon, shall he be levelled with the dust!—the dog! the parricide! First to betray my child, and then to put down myself! But he shall not escape—he shall not escape!' he cried with such a hellish growl that I fainted, and heard no more."

"Weel, that beats the world," exclaimed the smith. "I wad hae thought the mare wad hae luppen ower yird and stane, or fa'en down dead wi' fright."

"Na, na," said John, "in place o' that, whenever she heard him fa' a swearing, she was sae glad that she fell a nichering."

"Na, but that beats the hale world a'thegither!" quoth the smith. "Then it has been nae ghaist ava, ye may depend on that."

"I little wat what it was," replied John, "but it was a being in nae gude or happy state o' mind, and is a warning to us how muckle reason we hae to be thankfu' that we are as we are."

The doctor pretended to laugh at the absurdity of John's narration, but it was with a ghastly and doubtful expression of countenance, as though he thought the story far too ridiculous for any clod-poll to have contrived out of his own head; and forthwith he dismissed the two dealers in the marvellous, with very little ceremony, the one protesting that the thing beat the world, and the other that they had both reason to be thankful that they were as they were.

Next morning the villagers, small and great, were assembled at an early hour to witness the lifting of the body of the late laird, and, headed by the established and dissenting clergymen, and two surgeons, they proceeded to the tomb, and soon extracted the splendid coffin, which they opened with all due caution and ceremony. But instead of the murdered body of their late benefactor, which they expected in good earnest to find, there was nothing in the coffin but a layer of gravel, of about the weight of a corpulent man.

The clamour against the new laird then rose all at once into a tumult that it was impossible to check, every one declaring that he had not only murdered their benefactor, but, for fear of discovery, had raised the body, and given, or rather sold it, for dissection. The thing was not to be tolerated; so the mob proceeded in a body to Wineholm Place, to take out their poor deluded lady, and burn the doctor and his basely acquired habitation to ashes. It was not till the multitude had surrounded the house that the ministers and two or three other gentlemen could stay them, which they only did by assuring the mob that they would bring out the doctor before their eyes, and deliver him up to justice. This pacified the throng; but on inquiry at the hall, it was found that the doctor had gone off early that morning, so that nothing further could be done for the present. But the coffin, filled with gravel, was laid up in the aisle, and kept open for inspection.

Nothing could now exceed the consternation of the simple villagers of Wineholm at these dark and mysterious events. Business, labour, and employment of every sort, were at a stand, and the people hurried about to one another's houses, and mingled their conjectures together in one heterogeneous mass. The smith put his hand to his bellows, but forgot to blow till the fire went out; the weaver leaned on his loom, and listened to the legend of the ghastly tailor. The team stood in mid-furrow, and the thrasher agape over his flail; and even the dominie was heard to declare that the geometrical series of events was increasing by no *common* ratio, and therefore ought to be calculated rather arithmetically than by logarithms; and John Broadcast saw more and more reason for being thankfu' that he was as he was, and neither a stock, nor a stone, nor a brute beast.

Every new thing that happened was more extraordinary than the last; and the most puzzling of all was the circumstance of the late laird's mare, saddle, bridle, and all, being off before daylight next morning; so that Dr Davington was obliged to have recourse to his own, on which he was seen posting away on the road towards Edinburgh. It was thus but too obvious that the late laird had ridden off on his favourite mare,—but whither, none of the sages of Wineholm could divine. But their souls grew chill as an iceberg, and their very frames rigid, at the thought of a spirit riding away on a brute beast to the place appointed for wicked men. And

had not John Broadcast reason to be thankfu' that he was as he was?

However, the outcry of the community became so outrageous of murder and foul play, in so many ways, that the officers of justice were compelled to take note of it; and accordingly the sheriff-substitute, the sheriff-clerk, the fiscal, and two assistants, came in two chaises to Wincholm to take a precognition; and there a court was held which lasted the whole day, at which Mrs Davington, the late laird's only daughter, all the servants, and a great number of the villagers, were examined on oath. It appeared from the evidence that Dr Davington had come to the village and set up as a surgeon; that he had used every endeavour to be employed in the laird's family in vain, as the latter detested him; that he, however, found means of inducing his only daughter to elope with him, which put the laird quite beside himself, and from thenceforward he became drowned in dissipation; that such, however, was his affection for his daughter, that he caused her to live with him, but would never suffer the doctor to enter his door; that it was, nevertheless, quite customary for the doctor to be sent for to his lady's chamber, particularly when her father was in his cups; and that on a certain night, when the laird had had company, and was so overcome that he could not rise from his chair, he had died suddenly of apoplexy; and that no other skill was sent for, or near him, but this his detested son-in-law, whom he had by will disinherited, though the legal term for rendering that will competent had not expired. The body was coffined the second day after death, and locked up in a low room in one of the wings of the building; and nothing farther could be elicited. The doctor was missing, and it was whispered that he had absconded; indeed it was evident, and the sheriff acknowledged that, according to the evidence taken, the matter had a very suspicious aspect, although there was no direct proof against the doctor. It was proved that he had attempted to bleed the patient, but had not succeeded, and that at that time the old laird was black in the face.

When it began to wear nigh night, and nothing further could be learned, the sheriff-clerk, a quiet considerate gentleman, asked why they had not examined the wright who had made the coffin, and also placed the body in it. The thing had not been thought of; but he was found in court, and instantly put into the witness-box, and examined on oath. His name was James Sanderson, a little, stout-made, shrewd-looking man, with a very peculiar squint. He was examined thus by the procurator-fiscal:—

"Were you long acquainted with the late Laird of Wincholm, James?"

"Yes, ever since I left my apprenticeship; for, I suppose, about nineteen years."

"Was he very much given to drinking of late?"

"I could not say; he took his glass geyan heartily."

"Did you ever drink with him."

"O yes, mony a time."

"You must have seen him very drunk, then? Did you ever see him so drunk, for instance, that he could not rise?"

"Never; for long afore that, I could not have kenned whether he was sitting or standing."

"Were you present at the corpse-chesting?"

"Yes, I was."

"And were you certain the body was then deposited in the coffin?"

"Yes; quite certain."

"Did you screw down the coffin lid firmly then, as you do others of the same make?"

"No, I did not."

"What were your reasons for that?"

"They were no reasons of mine; I

did what I was ordered. There were private reasons, which I then wist not of. But, gentlemen, there are some things connected with this affair, which I am bound in honour not to reveal. I hope you will not compel me to divulge them at present."

"You are bound by a solemn oath, James, the highest of all obligations; and, for the sake of justice, you must tell everything you know; and it would be better if you would just tell your tale straightforward, without the interruption of question and answer."

"Well, then, since it must be so:—That day, at the chesting, the doctor took me aside and said to me, 'James Sanderson, it will be necessary that something be put into the coffin to prevent any unpleasant odour before the funeral; for owing to the corpulence, and the inflamed state of the body by apoplexy, there will be great danger of this.'

'Very well, sir,' says I; 'what shall I bring?'

"'You had better only screw down the lid lightly at present, then,' said he; 'and if you could bring a bucketful of quicklime a little while hence, and pour it over the body, especially over the face, it is a very good thing, an excellent thing, for preventing any deleterious effluvia from escaping.'

"'Very well, sir,' said I; and so I followed his directions. I procured the lime; and as I was to come privately in the evening to deposit it in the coffin, in company with the doctor alone, I was putting off the time in my workshop, polishing some trifle, and thinking to myself that I could not find in my heart to choke up my old friend with quicklime, even after he was dead, when, to my unspeakable horror, who should enter my workshop but the identical laird himself, dressed in his dead-clothes in the very same manner in which I had seen him laid in the coffin, but apparently all streaming in blood to the feet. I fell back over against a cart-wheel, and was going to call out, but could not; and as he stood straight in the door, there was no means of escape. At length the apparition spoke to me in a hoarse trembling voice, and it said to me, 'Jamie Sanderson! O, Jamie Sanderson! I have been forced to appear to you in a d—d frightful guise!' These were the very first words it spoke, and they were far from being a lie; but I halfflins thought to mysel that a being in such circumstances might have spoken with a little more caution and decency. I could make no answer, for my tongue refused all attempts at articulation, and my lips would not come together; and all that I could do was to lie back against my new cart-wheel, and hold up my hands as a kind of defence. The ghastly and blood-stained apparition, advancing a step or two, held up both its hands, flying with dead ruffles, and cried to me in a still more frightful voice, 'Oh, my faithful old friend, I have been murdered! I am a murdered man, Jamie Sanderson! And if you do not assist me in bringing upon the wretch due retribution, dire will be your punishment in the other world.'

"This is sheer raving, James," said the sheriff, interrupting him. "These words can be nothing but the ravings of a disturbed and heated imagination. I entreat you to recollect that you have appealed to the Great Judge of heaven and earth for the truth of what you assert here, and to answer accordingly."

"I know what I am saying, my Lord Sheriff," said Sanderson; "and I am telling naething but the plain truth, as nearly as my state of mind at the time permits me to recollect. The appalling figure approached still nearer and nearer to me, breathing threatenings if I would not rise and fly to his assistance, and swearing like a sergeant of dragoons at both the doctor and myself. At length it came so close to me that I had no other shift but to hold up both feet and

hands to shield me, as I had seen herons do when knocked down by a goshawk, and I cried out; but even my voice failed, so that I only cried like one through his sleep."

"'What the d—l are you lying gaping and braying at there?' said he, seizing me by the wrist and dragging me after him. 'Do you not see the plight I am in, and why won't you fly to succour me?'

"I now felt, to my great relief, that this terrific apparition was a being of flesh, blood, and bones like myself;—that, in short, it was indeed my kind old friend the laird popped out of his open coffin, and come over to pay me an evening visit, but certainly in such a guise as earthly visit was never paid. I soon gathered up my scattered senses, took my old friend into my room, bathed him all over, and washed him well with lukewarm water; then put him into a warm bed, gave him a glass or two of hot punch, and he came round amazingly. He caused me to survey his neck a hundred times, I am sure; and I had no doubt he had been strangled, for there was a purple ring round it, which in some places was black, and a little swollen; his voice creaked like a door-hinge, and his features were still distorted. He swore terribly at both the doctor and myself; but nothing put him half so mad as the idea of the quicklime being poured over him, and particularly over his face. I am mistaken if that experiment does not serve him for a theme of execration as long as he lives."

"So he is alive, then, you say?" asked the fiscal.

"O yes, sir, alive, and tolerably well, considering. We two have had several bottles together in my quiet room; for I have still kept him concealed, to see what the doctor would do next. He is in terror for him, somehow, until sixty days be over from some date that he talks of, and seems assured that the dog will have his life by hook or crook, unless he can bring him to the gallows betimes, and he is absent on that business to-day. One night lately, when fully half seas over, he set off to the schoolhouse, and frightened the dominie; and last night he went up to the stable, and gave old Broadcast a hearing for not keeping his mare well enough.

"It appears that some shaking motion in the coffining of the laird had brought him back to himself, after bleeding abundantly both at mouth and nose; that he was on his feet ere he knew how he had been disposed of, and was quite shocked at seeing the open coffin on the bed, and himself dressed in his grave-clothes, and all in one bath of blood. He flew to the door, but it was locked outside; he rapped furiously for something to drink, but the room was far removed from any inhabited part of the house, and none regarded; so he had nothing for it but to open the window, and come through the garden and the back lane leading to my workshop. And as I had got orders to bring a bucketful of quicklime, I went over in the forenight with a bucketful of heavy gravel, as much as I could carry, and a little white lime sprinkled on the top of it; and being let in by the doctor, I deposited it in the coffin, screwed down the lid, and left it. The funeral followed in due course, the whole of which the laird viewed from my window, and gave the doctor a hearty day's cursing for daring to support his head and lay it in the grave. And this, gentlemen, is the substance of what I know concerning this enormous deed, which is, I think, quite sufficient. The laird bound me to secrecy until such time as he could bring matters to a proper bearing for securing the doctor; but as you have forced it from me, you must stand my surety, and answer the charges against me."

The laird arrived that night with

proper authority, and a number of officers, to have the doctor, his son-in-law, taken into custody; but the bird had flown; and from that day forth he was never seen, so as to be recognised, in Scotland. The laird lived many years after that; and though the thoughts of the quicklime made him drink a great deal, yet from that time he never suffered himself to get *quite* drunk, lest some one might take it into his head to hang him, and he not know anything about it. The dominie acknowledged that it was as impracticable to calculate what might happen in human affairs as to square the circle, which could only be effected by knowing the ratio of the circumference to the radius. For shoeing horses, vending news, and awarding proper punishments, the smith to this day just beats the world. And old John Broadcast is as thankfu' to heaven as ever that things are as they are.

AN INCIDENT IN THE GREAT MORAY FLOODS OF 1829.

By Sir Thomas Dick Lauder.

The flood, both in the Spey and its tributary burn, was terrible at the village of Charlestown of Aberlour. On the 3d of August, Charles Cruickshanks, the innkeeper, had a party of friends in his house. There was no inebriety, but there was a fiddle; and what Scotsman is he who does not know that the well-jerked strains of a lively strathspey have a potent spell in them that goes beyond even the witchery of the bowl? On one who daily inhales the breezes from the musical stream that gives name to the measure, the influence is powerful, and it was that day felt by Cruickshanks with a more than ordinary degree of excitement. He was joyous to a pitch that made his wife grave. Mrs Cruickshanks was deeply affected by her husband's jollity. "Surely my goodman is daft the day," said she gravely; "I ne'er saw him dance at sic a rate. Lord grant that he binna *fey!*"*

* "'I think,' said the old gardener to one of the maids, 'the gauger's *fie*,'—by which word the common people express those violent spirits, which they think a presage of death."—*Guy Mannering.*

When the river began to rise rapidly in the evening, Cruickshanks, who had a quantity of wood lying near the mouth of the burn, asked two of his neighbours to go and assist him in dragging it out of the water. They readily complied, and Cruickshanks getting on the loose raft of wood, they followed him, and did what they could in pushing and hauling the pieces of timber ashore, till the stream increased so much, that, with one voice, they declared they would stay no longer, and, making a desperate effort, they plunged over-head, and reached the land with the greatest difficulty. They then tried all their eloquence to persuade Cruickshanks to come away, but he was a bold and experienced floater, and laughed at their fears; nay, so utterly reckless was he, that having now diminished the crazy ill-put-together raft he stood on, till it consisted of a few spars only, he employed himself in trying to catch at and save some haycocks belonging to the clergyman, which were floating past him. But while his attention was so engaged, the flood was rapidly increasing, till, at last, even his dauntless hear-

became appalled at its magnitude and fury. "A horse! a horse!" he loudly and anxiously exclaimed; "run for one of the minister's horses, and ride in with a rope, else I must go with the stream." He was quickly obeyed, but ere a horse arrived, the flood had rendered it impossible to approach him.

Seeing that he must abandon all hope of help in that way, Cruickshanks was now seen as if summoning up all his resolution and presence of mind to make the perilous attempt of dashing through the raging current, with his frail and imperfect raft. Grasping more firmly the iron-shod pole he held in his hand—called in floater's language a *sting*—he pushed resolutely into it; but he had hardly done so when the violence of the water wrenched from his hold that which was all he had to depend on. A shriek burst from his friends, as they beheld the wretched raft dart off with him down the stream, like an arrow freed from the bowstring. But the mind of Cruickshanks was no common one to quail before the first approach of danger. He poised himself, and stood balanced, with determination and self-command in his eye, and no sound of fear, or of complaint, was heard to come from him.

At the point where the burn met the river, in the ordinary state of both, there grew some trees, now surrounded by deep and strong currents, and far from the land. The raft took a direction towards one of these, and seeing the wide and tumultuous waters of the Spey before him, in which there was no hope that his loosely-connected logs could stick one moment together, he coolly prepared himself, and, collecting all his force into one well-timed and well-directed effort, he sprang, caught a tree, and clung among its boughs, whilst the frail raft, hurried away from under his foot, was dashed into fragments, and scattered on the bosom of the waves. A shout of joy arose from his anxious friends, for they now deemed him safe; but *he* uttered no shout in return. Every nerve was strained to procure help. "A boat!" was the general cry, and some ran this way, and some that, to endeavour to procure one. It was now between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. A boat was speedily obtained, and though no one was very expert in its use, it was quickly manned by people eager to save Cruickshanks from his perilous situation. The current was too terrible about the tree to admit of their nearing it, so as to take him directly into the boat; but their object was to row through the smoother water, to such a distance as might enable them to throw a rope to him, by which means they hoped to drag him to the boat. Frequently did they attempt this, and as frequently were they foiled, even by that which was considered as the gentler part of the stream, for it hurried them past the point whence they wished to make the cast of their rope, and compelled them to row up again by the side, to start on each fresh adventure.

Often were they carried so much in the direction of the tree as to be compelled to exert all their strength to pull themselves away from him they would have saved, that they might avoid the vortex that would have caught and swept them to destruction. And often was poor Cruickshanks tantalized with the approach of help, which came but to add to the other miseries of his situation that of the bitterest disappointment. Yet he bore all calmly. In the transient glimpses they had of him, as they were driven past him, they saw no blenching on his dauntless countenance—they heard no reproach, no complaint, no sound, but an occasional short exclamation of encouragement to persevere in their friendly endeavours. But the evening wore on, and still they were unsuccessful. It seemed to them that

something more than mere natural causes was operating against them. "His hour is come!" said they, as they regarded one another with looks of awe; "our struggles are vain." The courage and the hope which had hitherto supported them began to fail, and the descending shades of night extinguished the last feeble sparks of both, and put an end to their endeavours.

Fancy alone can picture the horrors that must have crept on the unfortunate man, as, amidst the impenetrable darkness which now prevailed, he became aware of the continued increase of the flood that roared around him, by its gradual advance towards his feet, whilst the rain and the tempest continued to beat more and more dreadfully upon him. That these were long ineffectual in shaking his collected mind, we know from the fact, afterwards ascertained, that he actually wound up his watch while in this dreadful situation. But, hearing no more the occasional passing exclamations of those who had been hitherto trying to succour him, he began to shout for help in a voice that became every moment more long-drawn and piteous, as, between the gusts of the tempest, and borne over the thunder of the waters, it fell from time to time on the ears of his clustered friends, and rent the heart of his distracted wife. Ever and anon it came, and hoarser than before, and there was an occasional wildness in its note, and now and then a strange and clamorous repetition for a time, as if despair had inspired him with an unnatural energy; but the shouts became gradually shorter,—less audible and less frequent,—till at last their eagerly listening ears could catch them no longer. "Is he gone?" was the half-whispered question they put to one another; and the smothered responses that were muttered around but too plainly told how much the fears of all were in unison.

"What was that?" cried his wife in a delirious scream; "that was his whistle I heard!" She said truly. A shrill whistle, such as that which is given with the fingers in the mouth, rose again over the loud din of the deluge and the yelling of the storm. He was not yet gone. His voice was but cracked by his frequent exertions to make it heard, and he had now resorted to an easier mode of transmitting to his friends the certainty of his safety. For some time his unhappy wife drew hope from such considerations, but his whistles, as they came more loud and prolonged, pierced the ears of his foreboding friends like the ill-omened cry of some warning spirit; and it may be matter of question whether all believed that the sounds they heard were really mortal. Still they came louder and clearer for a brief space; but at last they were heard no more, save in his frantic wife's fancy, who continued to start, as if she still heard them, and to wander about, and to listen, when all but herself were satisfied that she could never hear them again.

Wet and weary, and shivering with cold, was this miserable woman, when the tardy dawn of morning beheld her straining her eye-balls through the imperfect light, towards the trees where Cruickshanks had been last seen. There was something there that looked like the figure of a man, and on that her eyes fixed. But those around her saw, alas! too well, that what she fondly supposed to be her husband was but a bunch of wreck gathered by the flood into one of the trees,—for the one to which he clung had been swept away.

The body of poor Cruickshanks was found in the afternoon of next day, on the Haugh of Dandalcith, some four or five miles below. As it had ever been his uniform practice to wind up his watch at night, and as it was discovered to be nearly full wound when it was taken from his pocket, the fact of his having had self-possession enough to

obey his usual custom, under circumstances so terrible, is as unquestionable as it is wonderful. It had stopped at a quarter of an hour past eleven o'clock, which would seem to fix that as the fatal moment when the tree was rent away; for when that happened, his struggles amidst the raging waves of the Spey must have been few and short.

When the men, who had so unsuccessfully attempted to save him, were talking over the matter, and arguing that no human help could have availed him,—

"I'm thinkin' I could hae ta'en him out," said a voice in the circle.

All eyes were turned towards the speaker, and a general expression of contempt followed; for it was a boy of the name of Rainey, a reputed idiot, from the foot of Benrinnes, who spoke.

"You!" cried a dozen voices at once; "what would you have done, you wise man?"

"I wud hae tied an empty anker-cask to the end o' a lang, lang tow, an' I wud hae floated it aff frae near aboot whaur the raft was ta'en first awa; an' syne, ye see, as the stream teuk the raft till the tree, maybe she wud hae ta'en the cask there too; an' if Charlie Cruickshanks had ance gotten a haud o' this rope ——"

He would have finished, but his auditors were gone: they had silently slunk away in different directions, one man alone having muttered, as he went, something about "wisdom coming out of the mouth of fools."

CHARLIE GRAHAM, THE TINKER.

By George Penny.

The notorious Charlie Graham belonged to a gang of tinkers, who had for a long time travelled through the country, and whose headquarters were at Lochgelly, in Fife. They were to be found at all markets, selling their horn spoons, which was their ostensible occupation. But there was a great deal of business done in the pickpocket line, and other branches of the thieving art. About Charlie there were some remarkable traits of generosity. In the midst of all the crimes he committed, he was never known to hurt a poor man, but often out of his plunder helped those in a strait. His father was in the same line, and was long at the head of the gang; but being afterwards imprisoned for theft, housebreaking, &c., he was banished the county, banished Scotland, and publicly whipped. On one occasion he was banished, with certification that if he returned, he was to be publicly whipped the first market-day, and thereafter to be banished. Old Charlie was not long away when he returned, and was apprehended and conveyed to Perth jail. A vacancy having occurred in the office of executioner, the first market-day was allowed to pass without inflicting the sentence, upon which Charlie entered a protest, and was liberated. In various ways he eluded justice,—sometimes by breaking the prison, and sometimes for want of evidence. The last time he was brought in, he was met by an old acquaintance, who asked, "What is the matter now?" to which old Charlie replied, "Oh, just the auld thing, and nae proof;" which saying has since become a proverb. But this time they did find proof, and he was

again publicly whipped, and sent out of the country. One of his daughters, Meg Graham, who had been bred from her infancy in the same way, was every now and then apprehended for some petty theft. Indeed, she was so often in jail, that she got twenty-eight dinners from old John Rutherford, the writer, who gave the prisoners in the jail a dinner every Christmas. Meg, in her young days, was reckoned one of the first beauties of the time; but she was a wild one. She had been whipped and pilloried, but still the root of the matter remained.

Young Charlie was a man of uncommon strength and size, being about six feet high, and stout in proportion. His wrist was as thick as that of two ordinary men; he had long been the terror of the country, and attended all markets at the head of his gang, where they were sure to kick up a row among themselves. Two of their women would commence a battle-royal in the midst of the throng, scratch and tear one another's caps, until a mob was assembled, when the rest were very busy in picking pockets. In this way they were frequently very successful.

At a market to the west of Crieff a farmer got his pocket-book taken from him. It being ascertained that Charlie Graham and his gang were in the market,—who were well known to several of the respectable farmers, who frequently lodged them on their way to the country,—it was proposed to get Charlie and give him a glass, and tell him the story. Charlie accepted the invitation; and during the circulation of the glass, one of the company introduced the subject, lamenting the poor man's loss in such a feeling way, that the right chord was struck, and Charlie's generosity roused. An appeal was made to him to lend the poor man such a sum, as his credit was at stake. Charlie said they had done nothing that day, but if anything cast up, he would see what could be done. During this conversation another company came into the room; amongst whom was a man with a greatcoat, a Highland bonnet, and a large drover whip. After being seated, this personage was recognised as belonging to the gang, and they were invited to drink with them, whilst the story of the robbery was repeated. On this Charlie asked his friend if he could lend him forty pounds to give to the poor man, and he would repay him in a few days. The man replied that he had forty pounds which he was going to pay away; but if it was to favour a friend, he would put off his business and help him; when, to their astonishment, the identical notes which the man had lost were tossed to him; and Charlie said that that would relieve him in the meantime, and he could repay him when convenient. It was evident that Charlie smelt a rat, and took this method to get off honourably. Of course, the forty pounds were never sought after.

Charlie was one day lodged with a poor widow, who had a few acres of ground, and kept a public-house. She complained to him that she was unable to raise her rent, that the factor was coming that night for payment, and that she was considerably deficient. Charlie gave her what made it up, and in the evening went out of the way, after learning at what time the factor would be there. The factor came, received payment, and returned home; but on the way he was met by Charlie, who eased him of his cash, and returned the rent to the poor widow.

The Rev. Mr Graham of Fossoway came one day to Perth to discount some bills in the Bank of Scotland. Having got his bills cashed, his spirits rose to blood-heat, and a hearty glass was given to his friends, until the parson got a little muddy. His friends, loth to leave him in that state, hired a horse each to convey him home. It was dark and late when they set out, and by the

time they reached Damhead, where they put up their horses, it was morning. The house was re-building at the time, and the family living in the barn when the parson and his friends were introduced. Here they found Charlie and some of his friends over a bowl, of which the minister was cordially invited to partake. His companions also joined, and kept it up with great glee for some time—the minister singing his song, and Charlie getting very big. One of the friends, knowing how the land lay, was very anxious to be off, for fear of the minister's money, and ordered out the horses; but to this Charlie would by no means consent. This alarmed the friends still more; as for the minister, he was now beyond all fear. However, in a short time a number of men came in and called for drink, and then Charlie, after the glass had gone round, said he thought it was time for the minister to get home, and went out to see them on their horses; when he told them he had detained them till the return of these men, who, if they had met them, might have proved dangerous neighbours; but now they could go home in safety.

He was one day on his way to Auchterarder market, when he met a farmer going from home, in whose barn he had frequently lodged, when Charlie told him he was to lodge with him that night. The farmer said he could not take strangers into his barn in its present state, as his summer's cheese, and many other things, were lodged there. "D—n your cheese," replied Charlie; "do you think, old boy, that I would lay down my honesty for your trash o' cheese?" They parted, and Charlie got permission from the gudewife for himself, as there were no others with him. The farmer came home late, and knew not that Charlie was there. In the morning when he went into the barn, he was astonished to find it all in an uproar. Upwards of twenty individuals —men, women, and children—were lying among the straw. The wife was called upon to see what state the barn was in; and the old man, in no very soft voice, railed at her for admitting such a band. She replied that she would send them away quietly: and this she did by giving them as much brose and milk as they could take. On their departure, Charlie told him he was a mean old crab, and that his wife was worth a hundred of him. However, he kept his word as to the cheese, and nothing was touched.

In the market next day, a good deal of business was done in his way; several pockets were picked, and a number of petty thefts committed. Charlie being in the habit of dealing with respectable merchants for horn spoons, he was one day in the shop getting payment for a parcel. The money was counted down, but during the time his wife was taking it up, the merchant turned to speak to some one in the shop; the wife, on taking up the money, said she wanted five shillings; the merchant said he was positive he laid down the whole. She still insisted that she wanted five shillings, and the merchant was determined to resist; on which Charlie interfered, saying, "Come, come, ye limmer, down with the money; none of your tricks here."

At one time he took it into his head to enlist for a regiment in India, with a party in Perth; he did very well until they were ordered to join the regiment. All the recruits being assembled but Charlie, he at last was found drinking in a public-house, but would not stir a foot. The officer was got, and the party attempted, after fair means had failed, to take him by force. They only got him the length of the street, when he drew a short bludgeon from an inside pocket, and laid about him from right to left, in such a way that the whole were soon sprawling on the street, and he escaped. The officer,

seeing what kind of a character he was, desired the sergeant not to look after him, as he would have nothing to do with him.

At all the fairs he was present with his gang. If any row commenced he was sure to take a lead,—and whichever party he joined were generally left masters of the field. One midsummer market at Perth, a dreadful row got up between the weavers and the farmer lads, hundreds of whom attended the market at that time. Charlie and his friends joined the weavers; the streets were soon in a perfect uproar; the chapmen's stands were upset, and themselves tumbled in the midst of their goods; sweeties and gingerbread were scattered in all directions by the pressure of the contending parties; and broken heads and faces were to be seen in abundance. The whole fair was thrown into a dreadful state of confusion, until a party of military were brought out, who at length succeeded in restoring order; but Charlie and his friends were not to be found. Many individuals lost their hats, &c., and got bruised bones and torn coats; it was also discovered that many pockets had been picked during the affray.

Charlie had often been convicted of theft, imprisoned, and banished the county. He not unfrequently made his escape by breaking out of prison; but was at length apprehended for horse stealing; and during his confinement was put in irons, in one of the strong cages in the old jail. During his imprisonment he was very cheerful, often declaring they could have no proof against him; but a short time convinced him of his folly. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. When brought out to execution, he was attended by four artillerymen, for fear of resistance. He recognised many of his old acquaintances in the multitude —particularly the merchant with whom he dealt in spoons, and gave him a bow and a wave of his hand. When the fatal hour approached he appeared quite subdued, and submitted to his fate with calm resignation. After his body was cut down it was conveyed to the grave by an immense multitude; the coffin was opened and filled with quicklime, to render it useless for the surgeon.

Charlie's death was a severe loss to the gang; immediately after this Charlie Brown, his brother-in-law, became leader. This fellow, although not so large a man, was stout, firmly built, of great activity, and, like Graham, had been frequently in the hands of the law, and made shift to get clear, until at last the fiscal was determined to have him. It being ascertained that he was in the neighbourhood, a party of light dragoons was sent out with the officers, who traced him to Auchtergaven. When he saw the party, he set off through the fields, until fairly run down by two of the horsemen, and brought to Perth. This desperate character had on him about eighty guineas; he was charged with several crimes, convicted, and sent to Botany Bay for life. After this the gang, who had for a long period infested the country, dispersed, and was seldom heard of.—*Traditions of Perth.*

THE SNOWING-UP OF STRATH LUGAS;

OR, THE MATCH-MAKING LAIRD.

JOLLY old Simon Kirkton! thou art the very high-priest of Hymen. There is something softly persuasive to matrimony in thy contented, comfortable appearance; and thy house,—why, though it is situated in the farthest part of Inverness-shire, it is as fertile in connubial joys as if it were placed upon Gretna Green. Single blessedness is a term unknown in thy vocabulary; heaven itself would be a miserable place for thee, for *there* is neither marrying nor giving in marriage!

Half the county was invited to a grand dinner and ball at Simon's house in January 1812. All the young ladies had looked forward to it in joyous anticipation and hope, and all the young gentlemen, with considerable expectation—and fear. Everything was to be on the greatest scale: the dinner in the ancient hall, with the two family pipers discoursing sweet music between the courses, and the ball in the splendid new drawing-room, with a capital band from the county town. The Duke was to be there with all the nobility, rank, and fashion of the district; and, in short, such a splendid entertainment had never been given at Strath Lugas in the memory of man. The editor of the county paper had a description of it in type a month before, and the milliners far and near never said their prayers without a supplication for the health of Mr Kirkton. All this time that worthy gentleman was not idle. The drawing-room was dismantled of its furniture, and the floors industriously chalked over with innumerable groups of flowers. The larder was stocked as if for a siege; the domestics drilled into a knowledge of their duties; and every preparation completed in the most irreproachable style. I question whether Gunter ever dreamt of such a supper as was laid out in the dining-room: venison in all its forms, and fish of every kind. It would have victualled a seventy-four to China.

The day came at last,—a fine, sharp, clear day, as ever gave a bluish tinge to the countenance, or brought tears to "beauty's eye." There had been a great fall of snow a few days before, but the weather seemed now settled into a firm, enduring frost. The laird had not received a single apology, and waited in the hall along with his lady to receive the guests as they arrived.

"My dear, isna that a carriage coming up the Brose-fit-knowe? Auld Leddy Clavers, I declare. She'll be going to dress here, and the three girls. Anne's turned religious; so I'm thinking she's ower auld to be married. It's a pity the minister's no coming: his wife's just dead; but Jeanie'll be looking out for somebody. We maun put her next to young Gerfluin. Elizabeth's a thocht ower young; she can stay at the side-table with Tammy Maxwell—he's just a hobbletehoy—it wad be a very good match in time."

In this way, as each party made its appearance, the laird arranged in a moment the order in which every individual was to be placed at table; and even before dinner, he had the satisfaction of seeing his guests breaking off into the quiet *tête-à-têtes*, which the noise and occupation of a general company render sweet and secluded as a meeting "by moonlight alone." While his eye wandered round the various parties thus pleasantly engaged, it rested on the figure of a very beautiful girl whom he had not previously re-

marked. She sat apart from all the rest, and was amusing herself with looking at the pictures suspended round the room, apparently unconscious of the presence of so many strangers. She seemed in deep thought; but as she gazed on the representation of a battle-piece, her face changed its expression from the calmness of apathy to the most vivid enthusiasm.

"Mercy on us a'!" whispered the laird to his wife, "wha's she that? that beautiful young lassie in the white goon? An' no' a young bachelor within a mile o' her. Deil ane o' them deserves such an angel!"

"It's a Miss Mowbray," was the reply; "she came with Mrs Carmichael.—a great heiress they say: it's the first time she was ever in Scotland."

"Aha! say ye sae? Then we'll see if we canna keep her among us noo that she is come. Angus M'Leod—na, he'll no do—he's a gude enough lad, but he's no bonnie. Chairlie Fletcher—he wad do weel enough; but I'm thinking he'll do better for Bell Johnson. 'Od, donnered auld man, no to think o' him before! Chairlie Melville's the very man—the handsomest, bravest, cleverest chield she could hae; and if she's gotten the siller, so much the better for Chairlie—they'll mak a bonnie couple."

And in an instant the laird laid his hand on the shoulder of a young man, who was engaged with a knot of gentlemen discussing some recent news from the Peninsula, and dragging him away, said,—

"For shame, Chairlie, for shame! Do you no see that sweet, modest lassie a' by hersel? Gang up to her this minute—bide by her as lang as ye can—she's weel worth a' the attention ye can pay her. Miss Mowbray," he continued, "I'm sorry my friend, Mrs Carmichael, has left ye sae much to yoursel; but here's Chairlie, or rather I should say, Mr Charles, or rather I should say, Lieutenant Charles Melville, that will be happy to supply her place. He'll tak ye in to yer dinner, and dance wi' ye at the ball."

"All in place of Mrs Carmichael, sir?" replied the young lady, with an arch look.

"Weel said, my dear, weel said; but I maun leave younger folks to answer ye. I've seen the time I wadna hae been very blate to gie ye an answer that wad hae stoppit your 'wee bit mou, sae sweet and bonnie.'" Saying these words, and whispering to his young friend, "Stick till her, Chairlie," he bustled off, "on hospitable thoughts intent," to another part of the room.

After the introduction, the young people soon entered into conversation; and, greatly to the laird's satisfaction, the young soldier conducted Miss Mowbray into the hall, sat next her all the time of dinner, and seemed as delighted with his companion as the most match-making lady or gentleman could desire. The lady, on the other hand, seemed in high spirits, and laughed at the remarks of her neighbour with the greatest appearance of enjoyment.

"How long have you been with Mrs Carmichael?"

"I came the day before yesterday."

"Rather a savage sort of country, I am afraid, you find this, after the polished scenes of your own land?"

"Do you mean the country," replied the lady, "or the inhabitants? They are not nearly such savages as I expected; some of them seem half-civilised."

"It is only your good-nature that makes you think us so. When you know us better, you will alter your opinion."

"Nay; now don't be angry, or talk as all other Scotch people do, about your national virtues. I know you are a very wonderful people—your men all heroes, your peasants philosophers, and your women angels; but seriously, I was very much disappointed to find you so like other people."

"Why, what did you expect? Did you think we were 'men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders?'"

"No, I did not expect that; but I expected to find everything different from what I had been accustomed to. Now, the company here are dressed just like a party in England, and behave in the same manner. Even the language is intelligible at times; though the laird, I must say, would require an interpreter."

"Ah, the jolly old laird! His face is a sort of polyglot dictionary—it is the expression for good-humour, kindness, and hospitality, in all languages."

"And who is that at his right hand?"

"What? the henchman? That's Rory M'Taggart—he was piper for twenty years in the 73d, and killed three men with his own hand at Vimiera."

"And is that the reason he is called the henchman?"

"Yes; henchman means, 'the piper with the bloody hand—the slaughterer of three.'"

"What a comprehensive word! It is almost equal to the laird's face."

But here the laird broke in upon their conversation.

"Miss Mowbray, dinna be frightened at a' the daft things the wild sodger is saying to you." Then he added, in a lower tone, "Chairlie wad settle down into a douce, quiet, steady, married man, for a' his tantrums. It wad be a pity if a Frenchman's gun should spoil his beauty, puir fallow!"

The young lady bowed without comprehending a syllable of the speech of the worthy host.

"Are you likely to be soon ordered abroad?" she said.

"We expect the route for Spain every day; and then huzza for a peerage or Westminster Abbey!"

"Ah! war is a fine game when it is played at a distance. Why can't kings settle their disputes without having recourse to the sword?"

"I really can't answer your question, but I think it must be out of a kind regard for the interest of younger brothers. A war is a capital provision for poor fellows like myself, who were born to no estate but that excessively large one which the Catechism calls the 'estate of sin and misery.' But come, I see from your face you are very romantic, and are going to say something sentimental—luckily his Grace is proposing a removal into the ball-room; may I beg the honour of your hand?"

"Aha, lad!" cried the laird, who had heard the last sentence; "are ye at that wark already—asking a leddy's hand on sic short an acquaintance? But folk canna do't ower sune."

The bustle caused by the secession of those who preferred Terpsichore to Bacchus, luckily prevented Miss Mowbray's hearing the laird's observation, and in a few minutes she found herself entering with heart and soul into the full enjoyment of a country dance.

Marriages, they say, are made in heaven. Charles Melville devoutly wished the laird's efforts might be successful, and that one could be made on earth. She was indeed, as the laird expressed it, "a bonnie cratur to look at." I never could describe a beauty in my life—so the loveliness of the English heiress must be left to the imagination. At all events, she was "the bright consummate flower of the whole wreath" which was then gathered together at Strath Lugas; and even Lady Clavers said that—

"Miss Mowbray's very weel put on indeed, for sae young a lassie. Her hair's something like our Anne's—only I think Anne's has a wee richer tinge o' the golden."

"Preserve us a'!" whispered the laird; "puir Anne's hair is as red as a carrot."

"An' dinna ye think her voice,"

said her ladyship—"dinna ye think her voice is something like our Jeanie's—only maybe no sae rich in the tone?"

"Feth, ma'am," answered the laird, "I maun wait till I hear Miss Mowbray speak the Gaelic, for really the saft sort o' beautiful English she speaks gies her a great advantage."

"As ye say, Mr Kirkton," continued her ladyship, who, like all great talkers, never attended to what any one said but herself, "Jeanie has a great advantage ower her; but she's weel enough, for a' that."

In the meantime the young lady, who was the subject of this conversation, troubled herself very little as to what Lady Clavers said or thought on that occasion. I shall not on any account say that she was in love, for I highly disapprove of such a speedy surrender to Dan Cupid in the softer sex; but at all events she was highly delighted with the novelty of the scene, and evidently pleased with her partner. No scruple of the same kind restrains me from mentioning the state of Charlie Melville's heart. He was as deeply in love as ever was the hero of a romance, and in the pauses of the dance indulged in various reveries about love and a cottage, and a number of other absurd notions, which are quite common, I believe, on such occasions. He never deigned to think on so contemptible an object as a butcher's bill, or how inconvenient it would be to maintain a wife and four or five angels of either sex on ninety pounds a year; but at the same time, I must do him the justice to state, that, although he was a Scotsman, the fact of Miss Mowbray's being an heiress never entered into his contemplation; and if I may mention my own opinion, I really believe he would have been better pleased if she had been as portionless as himself.

But time and tide wear through the roughest day; no wonder, then, they wore very rapidly through the happiest evening he had ever spent. The Duke and the more distant visitors had taken their leave; "the mirth and fun grew fast and furious" among the younger and better acquainted parties who were left; but, greatly to the mortification of the young soldier, his partner was called away at the end of a dance, just when he had been anticipating a delightful *tête-à-tête* while the next was forming. With his heart nearly bursting with admiration and regret, he wrapt her in her cloaks and shawls, and in silent dejection, with only a warm pressure of the hand, which he was enchanted to find returned, he handed her into Mrs Carmichael's old-fashioned open car, though the night was dark and stormy,—and after listening to the last sound of the wheels as they were lost among the snow, he slowly turned, and re-entered the ball-room.

Their absence, to all appearance, had not been noticed by a single eye,—a thing at which he, as a lover under such circumstances is bound to be, was greatly surprised. "Blockheads!" he said, "they would not see the darkness if the sun were extinguished at midday." And he fell into a train of reflections, which, from the expression of his countenance, did not seem to be of a very exhilarating nature. In about twenty minutes, however, after his return, he was roused by the henchman, whom he had spoken of at dinner, who beckoned him from the hall.

"The bonny cratur!—the bonny cratur!" he began,—"an' sic a nicht to gang hame in!—the stars a' put out, the snaw beginning to drift, and a spate in the Lugas! Noo, if auld Andrew Strachan, the Leddy Carmichael's coachman,—doited auld body, an' mair than half fou',—tries the ford, oh, the lassie, the bonny lassie'll be lost! an' I'll never hae the heart to spend the crown-piece she slippit into my hand just afore the dancin'!"

But what more the worthy henchman might have said must remain a mystery to all succeeding time; for long before he had come to the episode of the crown, Charles had rushed hatless into the open air, and dashed forward at the top of his speed to overtake the carriage, in time to warn them from the ford. But the snow had already formed itself into enormous wreaths, which, besides impeding his progress, interfered greatly with his knowledge of the localities; and he pursued his toilsome way more in despair than hope. He shouted, in the expectation of his voice being heard, but he heard no reply. He stooped down to see the track of the wheels, but the snow fell so fast and drifted at the same time, that it was quite undistinguishable, even if the darkness had not been so deep. However, onwards he pressed towards the ford, and shouted louder and louder as he approached it.

The roaring of the stream, now swollen to a prodigious height, drowned his cries, and his eyes in vain searched for the object of his pursuit; far and near he directed his gaze, and felt a transport of joy at the hope, which their absence presented, that they had gone round by the bridge and were saved. He was about to return, when he thought he heard, in a bend in the river, a little way down, a faint scream above the roaring of the torrent. Quick as lightning he rushed towards the spot, and hallooed as loud as he could. The shriek was distinctly repeated, and a great way out in the water he saw some substance of considerable size. He shouted again, and a voice replied to him from the river. In an instant he had plunged into the stream, and though it was rushing with great impetuosity, it was luckily not so deep as to prevent his wading. And after considerable toil, for the water was above his breast, he succeeded in reaching the object he had descried from the bank. It was, indeed, Mrs Carmichael's car, and in it he had the inexpressible delight to find the two ladies, terrified, indeed, but happily in full possession of their presence of mind.

In a few hurried words, he desired them to trust entirely to him, and begging the elder lady to remain quiet in the carriage, he lifted the younger in his arms,—but in the most earnest language she implored him to save her companion first, as she had such confidence in herself that she was certain she could remain in the carriage till he had effected his return. Pressing her to his heart in admiration of such magnanimity, he laid her gently back, and lifting Mrs Carmichael from her seat, he pushed desperately for the shore. The water even in this short time had perceptibly risen, and on reaching the bank, and depositing his burden in safety, he rushed once more through the torrent, fearful lest a moment's delay should make it impracticable to reach the car. That light equipage was now shaking from the impetuous attacks of the stream, and at the moment when the fainting girl was lifted up, a rush of greater force taking it, now unbalanced by any weight, forced it on its side, and rolled it off into the great body of the river. It had been carried more than fifty yards below the ford, without, however, being overturned, and had luckily become entangled with the trunk of a tree; the horse, after severe struggles, had been drowned, and his inanimate weight had helped to delay the progress of the carriage. The coachman was nowhere to be found. Meanwhile the three, once more upon the land, pursued their path back to Strath Lugas. Long and toilsome was the road, but cheered to the young soldier by the happy consciousness that he had saved his "heart's idol" from death. Tired, and nearly worn out with the harassing nature of their journey and of their feelings, they at length reached the hospitable mansion they had so lately quitted.

The music was still sounding, the lights still burning brightly,—but when old Simon Kirkton saw the party enter his hall, no words can do justice to the horror of his expression. The ladies were consigned to the attention of his wife. He himself took especial care of the hero of the story; and after having heard the whole adventure, when the soldier, refreshed, and in a suit of the laird's apparel, was entering the dancing room, he slapped him on the shoulder, and said—

"Deil a doubt o't noo. If ye're no laird o' the bonny English acres, and gudeman o' the bonny English leddy, I've nae skill in spaein', that's a'."

The adventure quickly spread, and people were sent off in all directions with lights, to discover, if possible, the body of the unfortunate Andrew Strachan. After searching for a long time, our friend the henchman thought he heard a voice close beside him, on the bank. He held down his lantern, and, sure enough, there he saw the object of their pursuit, lying at the very edge of the water, and his body on the land! The water from time to time burst over his face, and it was only on these occasions that an almost inarticulate grunt showed that the comatose disciple of John Barleycorn was yet alive. The henchman summoned his companions, and on attentively listening to the groans, as they considered them, of the dying man, they distinctly heard him, as he attempted to spit out the water which broke in tiny waves over his mouth, exclaiming, "Faugh, faugh! I doot ye're changing the liquor—a wee drap mair whisky, and a sma' spoonfu' o' sugar." The nodding charioteer had been ejected from his seat on the first impetus of the "spate," and been safely floated to land, without perceiving any remarkable change of situation. It is needless to say he was considerably surprised to discover where he was on being roused by the henchman's party.

"It's my belief," said Jock Stewart, the piper, "the drucken body thocht he was tipplin' a' the time in the butler's ha'! It wad be a gude deed to let the daidlin' haveril follow his hat and wig; and I'm thinkin' by this time they'll be down about Fort-George."

The weather was become so stormy, and the snow so deep, that it was impossible for any one to leave the house that night. The hospitable laird immediately set about making accommodation for so large a party, and by a little management he contrived to render everybody comfortable. The fiddlers were lodged in the barn, the ladies settled by the half-dozen in a room, and a supply of cloaks was collected for the gentlemen in the hall. Where people are willing to be pleased, it is astonishing how easy they find it. Laughter long and loud resounded through all the apartments, and morn began to stand "upon the misty mountain-tops" ere sleep and silence took possession of the mansion. Next day the storm still continued. The prospect, as far as the eye could reach, was a dreary waste of snow; and it was soon perceived, by those who were skilful in such matters, that the whole party were fairly snowed-up, and how long their imprisonment might last no one could tell. It was amazing with what equanimity the intelligence was listened to; one or two young ladies, who had been particularly pleased with their partners, went as far as to say it was delightful.

The elders of the party bore it with great good-humour, on being assured from the state of the larder that there was no danger of a famine; and, above all, the laird himself, who had some private schemes of his own to serve, was elevated into the seventh heaven by the embargo laid on his guests.

"If this bides three days there 'll be a dizzen couple before Leddy-day. It's no possible for a lad and a lass to be snawed up thegither three days without

melting;—but we'll see the night how it's a' to be managed. Has onybody seen Mrs Carmichael and Miss Mowbray this morning?"

But before this question could be answered the ladies entered the room. They were both pale from their last night's adventure; but while the elder lady was shaking hands with her friends, and receiving their congratulations, the eyes of her young companion wandered searchingly round the apartment till they fell on Charles Melville. Immediately a flush came over her cheek, which before was deadly pale, and she started forward and held out her hand. He rushed and caught it, and even in presence of all that company could scarcely resist the inclination to put it to his lips.

"Thanks! thanks!" was all she said; and even in saying these short words her voice trembled, and a tear came to her eye. But when she saw that all looks were fixed on her, she blushed more deeply than ever, and retired to the side of Mrs Carmichael. The scene passed by no means unheeded by the laird.

"Stupid whelp!" he said, "what for did he no kiss her, an it were just to gie her cheeks an excuse for growing sae rosy? 'Od, if I had saved her frae droonin. I wadna hae been sae nice,—that's to say, my dear," he added to his wife, who was standing by, "if I hadna a wife o' my ain."

The storm lasted for five days. How the plans of the laird with regard to the matrimonial comforts of his guests prospered, I have no intention of detailing. I believe, however, he was right in his predictions, and the minister was presented with eight several sets of tea-things within three months. Many a spinster at this moment looks back with regret to her absence from the snow-party of Strath Lugas, and dates all her misfortunes from that unhappy circumstance. On the fourth morning of their imprisonment the laird was presented with a letter from Charles Melville. In it he informed him that he dared not be absent longer, in case of his regiment being ordered abroad, and that he had taken his chance and set off on his homeward way in spite of the snow. It ended with thanks for all his kindness, and an affectionate farewell. When this was announced to the party they expressed great regret at his absence. It seemed to surprise them all. Mrs Carmichael was full of wonder on the occasion; but Miss Mowbray seemed totally unmoved by his departure. She was duller in spirits than before, and refused to dance; but in other respects the mirth was as uproarious, and the dancing as joyous, as ever;—and in a day the snow was sufficiently cleared away—the party by different conveyances broke up—and the laird was left alone, after a week of constant enjoyment.

Four years after the events I have related, a young man presented himself for the first time in the pump-room at Bath. The gossips of that busy city formed many conjectures as to who and what he could be. Some thought him a foreigner, some a man of consequence *incog.*; but all agreed that he was a soldier and an invalid. He seemed to be about six-and-twenty, and was evidently a perfect stranger. After he had stayed in the room a short time, and listened to the music, he went out into the street, and just as he made his exit by one door, the marvels of the old beldames who congregated under the orchestra were called into activity by the entrance, through the other, of a young lady leaning on the arm of an old one. Even so simple an incident as this is sufficient in a place like Bath to give rise to various rumours and conjectures. She was tall, fair, and very beautiful, but she also seemed in bad health, and to be perfectly unknown. Such an event had not occurred at the pump-room for ages before. Even the master of the ceremonies was at fault.

"As near as he could guess, to the best of his conjecture, he believed he had never seen either the gentleman or the lady."

While surmises of all kinds were going their rounds in this manner, the gentleman pursued his walk up Milsom Street. His pace was slow, and his strength did not seem equal even to so gentle an exertion. He leant for support upon his walking-stick, and heard, mingled with many coughs, a voice which he well knew, calling,—

"Chairlie—Chairlie Melville, I say! pull, ye deil's buckie,—ugh—ugh!—sic a confounded conveyance for a Highland gentleman. Ah, Chairlie, lad," said our old acquaintance the laird, who had now got up to where his friend was standing, "sad times for baith of us. Here am I sent here wi' a cough that wad shake a kirk, ugh—ugh.—An' the gout in baith my feet,—to be hurled about in a chair that gangs upon wheels,—ugh—ugh,—by a lazy English vagabond that winna understand a word that I say till him.—An' you," and here the old man looked up in the young soldier's face—"Oh, Chairlie, Chairlie! is this what the wars hae brocht ye to?—ugh—ugh—yer verra mither wadna ken ye,—but come awa, —come awa to my lodgings in Pultney Street. and tell us a' about what ye've been doin',—ugh—ugh,—my fit, my fit, —pu' awa', ye ne'er-do-weel; turn about, and be hanged till ye,—do ye no ken the road to Pultney Street yet? Come awa, Chairlie, my man, dinna hurry." And thus mingling his commands to his chairman, with complaints of the gout to his friend, the laird led the way to his lodgings.

Charlie's story was soon told. He had shared in all the dangers and triumphs of the last three years of the war. He had been severely wounded at Waterloo, and had come to Bath with a debilitated frame and a major's commission. But though he spoke of past transactions as gaily as he could, the quick eyes of the laird perceived there was some "secret sorrow" which weighed down his spirits.

"An' did ye meet with nae love adventure in your travels? For ye maunna tell me a bit wound in the shouther would mak ye sae doun-hearted as ye are. Is there nae Spanish or French lassie that gies ye a sair heart? Tell it a' to me, an' if I can be of ony use in bringin' it about, ye may depend I'll do all in my power to help ye."

"No," replied Charles, smiling at the continued match-making propensities of his friend; "I shall scarcely require your services on that score. I never saw Frenchwoman or Spaniard that cost me a single sigh." And here, as if by the force of the word itself, the young man sighed.

"Weel, it must be some English or Scotch lassie then; for it's easy to be seen that somebody costs ye a sigh. I ance thocht you were in a fair way o' winnin' yon bonny cratur ye saved frae the spate o' the Lugas; but ye gaed awa in such a hurry the plant hadna time to tak root."

"She was too rich for the poor penniless subaltern to look to," replied the young man, a deep glow coming over his face.

"Havers! havers! She wad hae given a' her lands yon night for a foot o' dry grund. An' as ye won her, ye had the best right to wear her. And I'm muckle mista'en if the lassie didna think sae hersel."

"Miss Mowbray must have overrated my services; but at all events I had no right to take advantage of that fortunate accident to better my fortunes, by presuming on her feelings of gratitude to her preserver."

"What for no? what for no?" cried the laird; "ye should hae married her on the spot. There were eight couples sprang frae the snaw-meeting—ye

should hae made the ninth, and then ye needna hae had a ball put through your shouther, nor ever moved frae the braw holmes o' Surrey. 'Od, I wish it had been me that took her out o' the water; that is, if I had been as young as you, and Providence had afflicted me with the loss o' Mrs Kinkton."

"If I had been on a level with her as to fortune"——

"Weel, but noo yer brither's dead, ye're heir o' the auld house, an' ye're a major—what's to forbid the banns noo?"

"I have never heard of Miss Mowbray from that hour to this. In all probability she is married to some lucky fellow"——

"She wasna married when I saw Mrs Carmichael four months since; she was what leddies call delicate health though; she had aye been melancholy since the time of the water business. Mrs Carmichael thought ye were a great hale fellow ringin' awa."

"Mrs Carmichael is very kind."

"Deed is she," replied the laird, "as kind-hearted a woman as ever lived. She's maybe a thocht aulder, or I dinna doubt she wad be very happy to marry you hersel."

"I hope her gratitude would not carry her to such an alarming length," said Charles, laughing. "It would make young men rather tender of saving ladies' lives."

"If I knew where she was just now, I wad soon put everything to rights. It's no ower late yet, though ye maun get fatter before the marriage—ye wad be mair like a skeleton than a bridegroom. But, save us! what's the matter wi' ye? are ye no weel? headache? gout? what is't, man? Confound my legs, I canna stir. Sit down, and rest ye."

But Charles, with his eyes intently fixed on some object in the street, gazed as if some horrible apparition had met his sight. Alternately flushed and pale, he continued as if entranced, and then, deeply sighing, sunk senseless on the floor.

"Rory, Rory!" screamed the laird—"ugh, ugh! oh, that I could get at the bell! Cheer up, Chairlie. Fire! fire! ugh, ugh!—the lad will be dead before a soul comes near him. Rory, Rory!"

And luckily the ancient henchman, Rory MacTaggart, made his appearance in time to save his master from choking through fear and surprise. Charlie was soon recovered, and, when left again alone with the laird, he said—

As I hope to live, I saw her from this very window, just as we were speaking of her. Even her face I saw! Oh, so changed and pale! But her walk—no *two* can have such a graceful carriage!"

"Seen wha?" said the laird. "Mrs Carmichael? For it was her we were speaking o'—ay, she's sair changed; and her walk is weel kent; only I thocht she was a wee stiffer frae the rheumatism last year. But whaur is she?"

"It was Miss Mowbray I saw. She went into that house opposite."

"What! the house wi' the brass knocker, green door—the verandah with the flower-pots, an' twa dead geraniums?"

"Yes."

"Then just ring the bell, and tell that English cratur to pu' me in the wee whirligig across the street."

"Impossible, my dear laird! recollect your gout."

"Deil hae the gout and the cough too! Order the chair; I'll see if it's her in five minutes."

And away, in spite of all objections and remonstrances, went the laird to pay his visit. Now, if any one should doubt of the success of his negotiations, I—the writer of this story—Charles Melville, late major, —th regiment, shall be happy to convince him of it, if

he will drop in on me any day at Mowbray Hall, by my own evidence, and also that of my happy and still beautiful Madeline, though she is the mother of three rosy children, who at this moment are making such an intolerable noise that I cannot understand a sentence I am writing. I may just mention, that the laird attended the wedding, and that his cough entirely left him. He does not suffer an attack of the gout more than once a year. He has adopted my second boy, and every autumn we spend three months with him at Strath Lugas. Oh, that all match-makers were as innocent and disinterested as jolly old Simon Kirkton!—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

EZRA PEDEN.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

I sat and watched while all men slept, and lo!
Between the green earth and the deep green sea
I saw bright spirits pass, pure as the touch
Of May's first finger on the eastern hill.
Behind them followed fast a little cloud;
And from the cloud an evil spirit came—
A damnèd shape—one who in the dark pit
Held sovereign sway; and power to him was given
To chase the blessèd spirits from the earth,
And rule it for a season.
Soon he shed
His hellish slough, and many a subtle wile
Was his to seem a heavenly spirit to man.
First he a hermit, sore subdued in flesh,
O'er a cold cruse of water and a crust,
Poured out meek prayers abundant. Then he changed
Into a maid when she first dreams of man,
And from beneath two silken eyelids sent
The sidelong light of two such wondrous eyes,
That all the saints grew sinners. He subdued
Those wanton smiles, and grew a reverend dame,
With wintry ringlets, and grave lips, which dropt
Proverbial honey in her grandson's ear.
Then a professor of God's Word he seemed,
And o'er a multitude of upturned eyes
Showered blessed dews, and made the pitchy path,
Down which howl damnèd spirits, seem the bright
Thrice-hallowed way to heaven. Yet grimly through
The glorious veil of those seducing shapes
Frowned out the fearful spirit.

CHAPTER I.

THE religious legend which supplies my story with the motto, affords me no further assistance in arranging and interpreting the various traditional remembrances of the colloquies between one of the chiefs of the ancient Presbyterian Kirk and one of the inferior spirits of darkness. It is seldom that tradition requires any illustration; its voice is clear, and its language simple. It seeks to conceal nothing; what it can explain it explains, and scorns, in the homely accuracy of its protracted details, all mystery and reservation. But in the present story, there is much which the popular spirit of research would dread to have revealed;—a something too mystical and hallowed to be sought into by a devout people. Often as I have listened to it, I never heard it repeated without mutual awe in the teller and the auditor. The most intrepid peasant becomes graver and graver as he proceeds, stops before the natural termination of the story, and hesitates to pry into the supernatural darkness of the

tradition. It would be unwise, therefore, to seek to expound or embellish the legend,—it shall be told as it was told to me; I am but as a humble priest responding from the traditionary oracles, and the words of other years pass without change from between my lips.

Ezra Peden was one of the shepherds of the early Presbyterian flock, and distinguished himself as an austere and enthusiastic pastor; fearless in his ministration, delighting in wholesome discipline, and guiding in the way of grace the peer as well as the peasant. He grappled boldly with the infirmities and sins of the times; he spared not the rod in the way of his ministry; and if in the time of peril he laid his hand on the sword, in the time of peace his delight was to place it on the horns of the altar. He spared no vice, he compounded with no sin, and he discussed men's claims to immortal happiness with a freedom which made them tremble. Amid the fervour of his eloquence, he aspired, like some of his fellow-professors of that period, to the prophetic mantle. Plain and simple in his own apparel, he counted the mitred glory and exterior magnificence of the hierarchy a sin and an abomination, and preferred preaching on a wild hill, or in a lonesome glen, to the most splendid edifice.

Wherever he sojourned, dance and song fled;—the former he accounted a devoting of limbs which God made to the worship of Satan; the latter he believed to be a sinful meting out of wanton words to a heathen measure. Satan, he said, leaped and danced, and warbled and sung, when he came to woo to perdition the giddy sons and daughters of men. He dictated the colour and the cut of men's clothes—it was seemly for those who sought salvation to seek it in a sober suit; and the ladies of his parish were obliged to humble their finery, and sober down their pride, before his sarcastic sermons on female paintings, and plumings, and perfumings, and the unloveliness of love-locks. He sought to make a modest and sedate grace abound among women; courtship was schooled and sermoned into church controversy, and love into mystical professions; the common civilities between the sexes were doled out with a suspicious hand and a jealous charity, and the primrose path through the groves of dalliance to the sober vale of marriage was planted with thorns and sown with briars.

He had other endowments not uncommon among the primitive teachers of the Word. In his day, the empire of the prince of darkness was more manifest among men than now, and his ministry was distinguished, like the reign of King Saul, by the persecution of witches, and elves, and evil spirits. He made himself the terror of all those who dealt in divinations, or consulted the stars, or sought to avert witchcraft by sinful spell and charm, instead of overcoming it by sorrowings and spiritual watchings. The midnight times of planetary power he held as the prime moments of Satan's glory on earth, and he punished Hallowmas revellers as chief priests in the infernal rites. He consigned to church censure and the chastening of rods a wrinkled dame who sold a full sea and a fair wind to mariners, and who insulted the apostles, and made a mystical appeal to the twelve signs of heaven in setting a brood goose with a dozen eggs. His wrath, too, was observed to turn against all those who compounded with witches, and people who carried evil influence in their eyes—this was giving tribute to the fiend, and bribing the bottomless pit.

He rebuked the venerable dame, during three successive Sundays, for placing a cream bowl and new-baked cake in the paths of the nocturnal elves who, she imagined, had plotted to steal her grandson from the mother's bosom.

He turned loose many Scripture threatenings against those diminutive and capricious beings, the fairies, and sought to preach them from the land. He prayed on every green hill, and held communings in every green valley. He wandered forth at night, as a spiritual champion, to give battle to the enemies of the light. The fairies resigned the contest with a foe equipped from such an armoury, and came no more among the sons and daughters of men. The sound of their minstrelsy ceased on the hill; their equestrian processions were seen no more sweeping past at midnight beneath the beam of the half-filled moon; and only a solitary and sullen elf or two remained to lament the loss of their immemorial haunts. With the spirits of evil men and the lesser angels of darkness he waged a fierce and dubious war; he evoked an ancient ghost from a ruined tower, which it had shared for generations with the owl; and he laid or tranquillized a fierce and troubled spirit which had haunted the abode of a miser in a neighbouring churchyard, and seemed to gibber and mumble over his bones. All these places were purified by prayer, and hallowed by the blessing of the gifted pastor Ezra Peden.

The place of his ministry seemed fitted by nature, and largely endowed by history, for the reception and entertainment of all singular and personified beliefs. Part was maritime, and part mountainous, uniting the aërial creeds of the shepherds with the stern and more imposing beliefs of the husbandman, and the wild and characteristic superstitions of the sailors. It often happened, when he had marched against and vanquished a sin or a superstition of native growth, he was summoned to wage war with a new foe; to contend with a legion of errors, and a strange race of spirits from the haunted coasts of Norway or Sweden. All around him on every side were records of the mouldering influence of the enemies of faith and charity. On the hill where the heathen Odin had appeared to his worshippers in the circle of granite, the pillars of his Runic temple promised to be immortal; but the god was gone, and his worship was extinct. The sword, the spear, and the banner, had found sanctuary from fields of blood on several lofty promontories; but shattered towers and dismantled castles told that for a time hatred, oppression, and revenge had ceased to triumph over religion. Persecution was now past and gone, a demon exorcised by the sword had hallowed three wild hills and sanctified two little green valleys with the blood of martyrs. Their gravestones, bedded among heather or long grass, cried up to heaven against their oppressors in verses which could not surely fail to elude the punishment awarded by the Kirk against poesy. Storms, and quicksands, and unskilful mariners, or, as common belief said, the evil spirits of the deep, had given to the dangerous coast the wrecks of three stately vessels; and there they made their mansions, and raised whirlwinds, and spread quicksands, and made sandbanks, with a wicked diligence, which neither prayer nor preaching could abate. The forms under which these restless spirits performed their pranks have unfortunately been left undefined by a curious and poetical peasantry.

It happened one winter during the fifteenth year of the ministry of Ezra Peden, and in the year of grace 1705, that he sat by his fire pondering deep among the treasures of the ancient Presbyterian worthies, and listening occasionally to the chafing of the coming tide against cliff and bank, and the fitful sweep of heavy gusts of wind over the roof of his manor. During the day he had seemed more thoughtful than usual; he had consulted Scripture with an anxious care, and fortified his own interpretation of the sacred text by the

wisdom of some of the chiefs and masters of the calling. A Bible, too, bound in black oak, and clasped with silver, from the page of which sin had received many a rebuke, and the abominations of witchcraft and sorcery had been cleansed from the land, was brought from its velvet sanctuary and placed beside him. Thus armed and prepared, he sat like a watcher of old on the towers of Judah; like one who girds up his loins and makes bare his right arm for some fierce and dubious contest.

All this stir and preparation passed not unnoticed of an old man, his predecessor's coeval, and prime minister of the household; a person thin, religious, and faithful, whose gifts in prayer were reckoned by some old people nearly equal to those of the anointed pastor. To such a distinction Josiah never thought of aspiring; he contented himself with swelling the psalm into something like melody on Sunday; visiting the sick as a forerunner of his master's approach, and pouring forth prayers and graces at burials and banquetings, as long and dreary as a hill sermon. He looked on the minister as something superior to man; a being possessed by a divine spirit; and he shook his head with all its silver hairs, and uttered a gentle groan or two, during some of the more rapt and glowing passages of Ezra's sermons.

This faithful personage stood at the door of his master's chamber, unwilling to go in, and yet loath to depart. "Josiah, thou art called, Josiah," said Ezra, in a grave tone, "so come hither; the soul of an evil man, a worker of iniquity, is about to depart; one who drank the blood of saints, and made himself fat with the inheritance of the righteous. It hath been revealed to me that his body is sorely troubled; but I say unto you, he will not go from the body without the strong compulsion of prayer, and therefore am I summoned to war with the enemy; so I shall arm me to the task."

Josiah was tardy in speech, and before he could reply, the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard at the gate: the rider leapt down, and, splashed with mire and sprinkled with sleet, he stood in an instant before the minister.

"Ah, sir," said the unceremonious messenger, "haste! snatch up the looms of redemption, and bide not the muttering of prayer, else auld Mahoun will have his friend Bonshaw to his cauldron, body and soul, if he hasna him half-way hame already. Godsake, sir, start and fly, for he cannot shoot over another hour! He talks of perdition, and speaks about a broad road and a great fire, and friends who have travelled the way before him. He's no his lane, however,—that's one comfort; for I left him conversing with an old cronie, whom no one saw but himself—one whose bones are ripe and rotten; and mickle they talked of a place called Tophet,—a hot enough region, if one can credit them; but I aye doubt the accounts of such travellers,—they are like the spies of the land of promise"——

"Silence thine irreverent tongue, and think of thy latter end with fear and trembling," said Ezra, in a stern voice. "Mount thy horse, and follow me to the evil man, thy master; brief is the time, and black is the account, and stern and inexorable will the summoning angel be."

And leaping on their horses, they passed from the manse, and sought out the bank of a little busy stream, which, augmented by a fall of sleet, lifted up a voice amid its rocky and desolate glen equal to the clamour of a mightier brook. The glen or dell was rough with sharp and projecting crags, which, hanging forward at times from opposite sides, seemed to shut out all further way; while from between their dark-gray masses the rivulet leapt out in many divided streams. The brook

again gathered together its waters, and subsided into several clear deep pools, on which the moon, escaping for a moment from the edge of a cloud of snow, threw a cold and wavering gleam. Along the sweeps of the stream a rough way, shaped more by nature than by the hand of man, winded among the rocks; and along this path proceeded Ezra, pondering on the vicissitudes of human life.

At length he came where the glen expanded, and the sides became steep and woody; amid a grove of decaying trees, the mansion of Bonshaw rose, square and gray. Its walls of rough granite were high and massive; the roof, ascending steep and sharp, carried a covering of red sandstone flags; around the whole the rivulet poured its scanty waters in a deep moat, while a low-browed door, guarded by loopholes, gave it the character of a place of refuge and defence. Though decayed and war-worn now, it had, in former times, been a fair and courtly spot. A sylvan nook or arbour, scooped out of the everlasting rock, was wreathed about with honeysuckle; a little pool, with a margin studded with the earliest primroses, lay at its entrance; and a garden, redeemed by the labour of man from the sterile upland, had its summer roses and its beds of lilies, all bearing token of some gentle and departed inhabitant.

As he approached the house, a candle glimmered in a small square window, and threw a line or two of straggling light along the path. At the foot of the decayed porch he observed the figure of a man kneeling, and presently he heard a voice chanting what sounded like a psalm or a lyke-wake hymn. Ezra alighted and approached,—the form seemed insensible of his presence, but stretched his hands towards the tower; and while the feathery snow descended on his gray hair, he poured his song forth in a slow and melancholy manner.

"I protest," said the messenger, "here kneels old William Cameron, the Covenanter. Hearken, he pours out some odd old-world malison against Bonshaw. I have heard that the laird hunted him long and sore in his youth, slew his sons, burned his house, threw his two bonny daughters desolate,—that was nae gentle deed, however,—and broke the old mother's heart with downright sorrow. Sae I canna much blame the dour auld carle for remembering it even now, though the candles of Bonshaw are burning in the socket, and his light will soon be extinguished for ever. Let us hearken to his psalm or his song; it is no every night we have minstrelsy at Bonshaw gate, I can tell ye that."

The following are the verses, which have been preserved under the title of "Ane godly exultation of William Cameron, a chosen vessel, over Bonshaw, the persecutor." I have adopted a plainer, but a less descriptive title—

THE DOWNFALL OF DALZELL.

The wind is cold, the snow falls fast,
The night is dark and late,
As I lift aloud my voice and cry
By the oppressor's gate.
There is a voice in every hill,
A tongue in every stone;
The greenwood sings a song of joy,
Since thou art dead and gone;
A poet's voice is in each mouth,
And songs of triumph swell,
Glad songs, that tell the gladsome earth
The downfall of Dalzell.

II.

As I raised up my voice to sing,
I heard the green earth say,
Sweet am I now to beast and bird,
Since thou art passed away:
I hear no more the battle shout,
The martyrs' dying moans;
My cottages and cities sing
From their foundation-stones;
The carbine and the culverin's mute,—
The death-shot and the yell
Are turned into a hymn of joy,
For thy downfall, Dalzell

III.

I've trod thy banner in the dust,
And caused the raven call
From thy bride-chamber to the owl
Hatched on thy castle wall;
I've made thy minstrels' music dumb,
And silent now to fame
Art thou, save when the orphan casts
His curses on thy name.
Now thou may'st say to good men's prayers
A long and last farewell:
There's hope for every sin save thine,—
Adieu, adieu, Dalzell!

IV.

The grim pit opes for thee her gates,
Where punished spirits wail,
And ghastly Death throws wide his door,
And hails thee with a Hail.
Deep from the grave there comes a voice,
A voice with hollow tones,
Such as a spirit's tongue would have
That spoke through hollow bones:—
"Arise, ye martyred men, and shout
From earth to howling hell;
He comes, the persecutor comes!
All hail to thee, Dalzell!"

V.

O'er an old battle-field there rushed
A wind, and with a moan
The severed limbs all rustling rose,
Even fellow bone to bone.
"Lo! there he goes," I heard them cry,
"Like babe in swathing band,
Who shook the temples of the Lord,
And passed them 'neath his brand.
Cursed be the spot where he was born,
There let the adders dwell,
And from his father's hearthstone hiss:
All hail to thee, Dalzell!"

VI.

I saw thee growing like a tree,—
Thy green head touched the sky,—
But birds far from thy branches built,
The wild deer passed thee by;
No golden dew dropt on thy bough,
Glad summer scorned to grace
Thee with her flowers, nor shepherds wooed
Beside thy dwelling-place;
The axe has come and hewed thee down,
Nor left one shoot to tell
Where all thy stately glory grew:
Adieu, adieu, Dalzell!

VII.

An ancient man stands by thy gate,
His head like thine is gray;
Gray with the woes of many years,
Years fourscore and a day.
Five brave and stately sons were his;
Two daughters, sweet and rare;
An old dame, dearer than them all,
And lands both broad and fair;—
Two broke their hearts when two were slain,
And three in battle fell,—
An old man's curse shall cling to thee,—
Adieu, adieu, Dalzell!

VIII.

And yet I sigh to think of thee,
A warrior tried and true
As ever spurred a steed, when thick
The splintering lances flew.
I saw thee in thy stirrups stand,
And hew thy foes down fast,
When Grierson fled, and Maxwell failed,
And Gordon stood aghast;
And Graeme, saved by thy sword, raged fierce
As one redeemed from hell.
I came to curse thee,—and I weep:
So go in peace, Dalzell!

When this wild and unusual hymn concluded, the Cameronian arose and departed, and Ezra and his conductor entered the chamber of the dying man.

He found him stretched on a couch of state, more like a warrior cut in marble than a breathing being. He had still a stern and martial look, and his tall and stalwart frame retained something of that ancient exterior beauty for which his youth was renowned. His helmet, spoiled by time of its plumage, was placed on his head; a rusty corslet was on his bosom; in his arms, like a bride, lay his broad and famous sword; and as he looked at it, the battles of his youth passed in array before him. Armour and arms hung grouped along the walls, and banners, covered with many a quaint and devotional device, waved in their places as the domestic closed the door on Ezra and the dying warrior in the chamber of presence.

The devout man stood and regarded his ancient parishioner with a meek and sorrowful look; but nothing visible or present employed Bonshaw's reflections or moved his spirit—his thoughts had wandered back to earlier years, and to scenes of peril and blood. He imagined himself at the head of his horsemen in the hottest period of the persecution, chasing the people from rock to rock, and from glen to cavern. His imagination had presented to his eye the

destruction of the children of William Cameron. He addressed their mother in a tone of ironical supplication,—

"Woman, where is thy devout husband, and thy five holy sons? Are they busied in interminable prayers or everlasting sermons? Whisper it in my ear, woman,—thou hast made that reservation doubtless in thy promise of concealment. Come, else I will wrench the truth out of thee with these gentle catechists, the thumbscrew and the bootikin. Serving the Lord, sayest thou, woman? Why, that is rebelling against the king. Come, come, a better answer, else I shall make thee a bride for a saint on a bloody bed of heather!

Here he paused and waved his hand like a warrior at the head of armed men, and thus he continued,—

"Come, uncock thy carbine, and harm not the woman till she hear the good tidings. Sister saint, how many bairns have ye? I bless God, saith she, five—Reuben, Simon, Levi, Praisegod, and Patrick. A bonny generation, woman. Here, soldier, remove the bandages from the faces of those two young men before ye shoot them. There stands Patrick, and that other is Simon;—dost thou see the youngest of thy affections? The other three are in Sarah's bosom—thyself shall go to Abraham's. The woman looks as if she doubted me;—here, toss to her those three heads—often have they lain in her lap, and mickle have they prayed in their time. Out, thou simpleton! canst thou not endure the sight of the heads of thine own fair-haired sons, the smell of powder, and the flash of a couple of carbines?"

The re-acting of that ancient tragedy seemed to exhaust for a little while the old persecutor. He next imagined himself receiving the secret instructions of the Council.

"What, what, my lord, must all this pleasant work fall to me? A reeking house and a crowing cock shall be scarce things in Nithsdale. Weepings and wailings shall be rife—the grief of mothers, and the moaning of fatherless babes. There shall be smoking ruins and roofless kirks, and prayers uttered in secret, and sermons preached at a venture and a hazard on the high and solitary places. Where is General Turner?—Gone where the wine is good?—And where is Grierson?—Has he begun to talk of repentance?—Gordon thinks of the unquenchable fire which the martyred Cameronian raved about; and gentle Graeme vows he will cut no more throats unless they wear laced cravats. Awell, my lords; I am the king's servant, and not Christ's, and shall boune me to the task."

His fancy flew over a large extent of time, and what he uttered now may be supposed to be addressed to some invisible monitor; he seemed not aware of the presence of the minister.

"Auld, say you, and gray-headed, and the one foot in the grave; it is time to repent, and spice and perfume over my rottenness, and prepare for heaven? I'll tell ye, but ye must not speak on't—I tried to pray late yestreen—I knelt down, and I held up my hands to heaven—and what think ye I beheld? a widow woman and her five fair sons standing between me and the Most High, and calling out, 'Woe, woe, on Bonshaw.' I threw myself with my face to the earth, and what got I between my hands? A gravestone which covered five martyrs, and cried out against me for blood which I had wantonly shed. I heard voices from the dust whispering around me; and the angel which watched of old over the glory of my house hid his face with his hands, and I beheld the evil spirits arise with power to punish me for a season. I'll tell ye what I will do—among the children of those I have slain shall my inheritance be divided; so sit down, holy sir, and sit down, most learned man, and hearken to my

bequest. To the children of three men slain on Irongray Moor—to the children of two slain on Closeburn-hill—to—no, no, no, all that crowd, that multitude, cannot be the descendants of those whom I doomed to perish by the rope, and the pistol, and the sword. Away, I say, ye congregation of zealots and psalm-singers !—disperse, I say, else I shall trample ye down beneath my horse's hoofs ! Peace, thou white-headed stirrer of sedition, else I shall cleave thee to the collar !—wilt thou preach still ?"

Here the departing persecutor uttered a wild imprecation, clenched his teeth, leaped to his feet, waved his sword, and stood for several moments, his eyes flashing from them a fierce light, and his whole strength gathered into a blow which he aimed at his imaginary adversary. But he stiffened as he stood—a brief shudder passed over his frame, and he was dead before he fell on the floor, and made the hall re-echo.

The minister raised him in his arms a smile of military joy still dilated his stern face—and his hand grasped the sword hilt so firmly that it required some strength to wrench it from his hold. Sore, sore the good pastor lamented that he had no death-bed communings with the departed chief, and he expressed this so frequently, that the peasantry said, on the day of his burial, that it would bring back his spirit to earth and vex mankind, and that Ezra would find him particularly untractable and bold. Of these whisperings he took little heed, but he became somewhat more grave and austere than usual.

CHAPTER II.

IT happened on an evening about the close of the following spring, when the oat braird was flourishing, and the barley shot its sharp green spikes above the clod, carrying the dew on the third morning, that Ezra Peden was returning from a wedding at Buckletiller. When he left the bridal chamber it was about ten o'clock. His presence had suppressed for a time the natural ardour for dancing and mirth which characterises the Scotch ; but no sooner was he mounted, and the dilatory and departing clatter of his horse's hoofs heard, than musicians and musical instruments appeared from their hiding-places. The floor was disencumbered of the bridal dinner-tables, the maids bound up their long hair, and the hinds threw aside their mantles, and, taking their places and their partners, the restrained mirth broke out like a whirlwind. Old men looked on with a sigh, and uttered a feeble and faint remonstrance, which they were not unwilling should be drowned in the abounding and augmenting merriment.

The pastor had reached the entrance of a little wild and seldom frequented glen, along which a grassy and scarce visible road winded to an ancient burial-ground. Here the graceless and ungodly merriment first reached his ears, and made the woody hollow ring and resound. Horse and rider seemed possessed of the same spirit—the former made a full halt when he heard the fiddle note, while the latter, uttering a very audible groan, and laying the bridle on his horse's neck, pondered on the wisest and most effectual way of repressing this unseemly merriment—of cleansing the parish of this ancient abomination. It was a beautiful night ; the unrisen moon had yet a full hour of travel before she could reach the tops of the eastern hills ; the wind was mute, and no sound was abroad save the chafing of a small runnel, and the bridal mirth.

While Ezra sat casting in his own mind a long and a dubious contest with this growing and unseemly sin, something like the shadowy outline of a horse and rider appeared in the path. The night was neither light nor dark, and the way, grassy and soft, lay broad and uninterrupted between two hazel and holly groves. As the pastor lifted up his eyes, he beheld a dark rider reining up a dark horse side by side with his own, nor did he seem to want any accoutrement necessary for ruling a fine and intractable steed. As he gazed, the figure became more distinct; it seemed a tall martial form, with a slouched hat and feather, and a dark and ample mantle, which was muffled up to his eyes. From the waist downward all was indistinct, and horse and rider seemed to melt into one dark mass visible in the outline alone. Ezra was too troubled in spirit to court the intrusion of a stranger upon his meditations; he bent on him a look particularly forbidding and stern, and having made up his mind to permit the demon of mirth and minstrelsy to triumph for the present, rode slowly down the glen.

But side by side with Ezra, and step by step, even as shadow follows substance, moved the mute and intrusive stranger. The minister looked at his companion, and stirred his steed onward; with corresponding speed moved the other, till they came where the road branched off to a ruined castle. Up this way, with the wish to avoid his new friend, Ezra turned his horse; the other did the same. The former seemed suddenly to change his mind, and returned to the path that led to the old burial-ground; the latter was instantly at his side, his face still hidden in the folds of his mantle.

Now, Ezra was stern and unaccommodating in kirk controversy, and the meek and gentle spirit of religion, and a sense of spiritual interest, had enough to do to appease and sober down a temper naturally bold, and even warlike. Exasperated at this intruding stranger, his natural triumphed over his acquired spirit, and lifting his riding-stick, and starting up in his stirrups, he aimed a blow equal to the unhorsing of any ordinary mortal. But the weapon met with no obstruction—it seemed to descend through air alone. The minister gazed with dread on this invulnerable being; the stranger gazed on him; and both made a halt like men preparing for mortal fray. Ezra, who felt his horse shuddering beneath him, began to suspect that his companion pertained to a more dubious state of existence than his own, and his grim look and sable exterior induced him to rank him at once among those infamous and evil spirits which are sometimes permitted to trouble the earth, and to be a torment to the worthy and the devout.

He muttered a brief and pithy prayer, and then said,—

"Evil shape, who art thou, and wherefore comest thou unto me? If thou comest for good, speak; if for my confusion and my harm, even do thine errand; I shall not fly from thee."

"I come more for mine own good than for thy harm," responded the figure. "Far have I ridden, and much have I endured, that I might visit thee and this land again."

"Do you suffer in the flesh, or are you tortured in the spirit?" said the pastor, desirous to know something certain of his unwelcome companion.

"In both," replied the form. "I have dwelt in the vale of fire, in the den of punishment, hollow, and vast, and dreadful; I have ridden through the region of snow and the land of hail; I have swam through the liquid wilderness of burning lava,—passed an illimitable sea, and all for the love of one hour of this fair green earth, with its fresh airs and its new-sprung corn."

Ezra looked on the figure with a

steady and a penetrating eye. The stranger endured the scrutiny.

"I must know of a truth to whom and what I speak—I must see you face to face. Thou mayest be the grand artificer of deceit come to practise upon my immortal soul. Unmantle thee, I pray, that I may behold if thou art a poor and an afflicted spirit punished for a time, or that fierce and restless fiend who bears the visible stamp of eternal reprobation."

"I may not withstand thy wish," muttered the form in a tone of melancholy, and dropping his mantle, and turning round on the pastor, said, "Hast thou forgotten me?"

"How can I forget thee?" said Ezra, receding as he spoke. "The stern and haughty look of Bonshaw has been humbled indeed. Unhappy one, thou art sorely changed since I beheld thee on earth with the helmet-plume fanning thy hot and bloody brow as thy right hand smote down the blessed ones of the earth! The Almighty doom—the evil and the tormenting place—the vile companions—have each in their turn done the work of retribution upon thee; thou art indeed more stern and more terrible, but thou art not changed beyond the knowledge of one whom thou hast hunted and hounded, and sought to slay utterly."

The shape or spirit of Bonshaw, dilated with anger, and in a quicker and fiercer tone, said—

"Be charitable; flesh and blood, be charitable. Doom not to hell-fire and grim companions one whose sins thou canst not weigh but in the balance of thine own prejudices. I tell thee, man of God, the uncharitableness of the sect to which thou pertainest has thronged the land of punishment as much as those who headed, and hanged, and stabbed, and shot, and tortured. I may be punished for a time, and not wholly reprobate."

"Punished in part, or doomed in whole, thou needs must be," answered the pastor, who seemed now as much at his ease as if this singular colloquy had happened with a neighbouring divine. "A holy and a blessed spirit would have appeared in a brighter shape. I like not thy dubious words, thou half-punished and half-pardoned spirit. Away, vanish! shall I speak the sacred words which make the fiends howl, or wilt thou depart in peace?"

"In peace I come to thee," said the spirit, "and in peace let me be gone. Hadst thou come sooner when I summoned thee, and not loitered away the precious death-bed moments, hearkening the wild and fanciful song of one whom I have deeply wronged, this journey might have been spared—a journey of pain to me, and peril to thyself."

"Peril to me!" said the pastor; "be it even as thou sayest. Shall I fly for one cast down, over whose prostrate form the purging fire has passed? Wicked was thy course on earth—many and full of evil were thy days—and now thou art loose again, thou fierce and persecuting spirit,—a woe, and a woe to poor Scotland!"

"They are loose who never were bound," answered the spirit of Bonshaw, darkening in anger, and expanding in form, "and that I could soon show thee. But, behold, I am not permitted;—there is a watcher—a holy one come nigh prepared to resist and to smite. I shall do thee no harm, holy man—I vow by the pains of punishment and the conscience-pang—now the watcher has departed."

"Of whom speakest thou?" inquired Ezra. "Have we ministering spirits who guard the good from the plots of the wicked ones? Have we evil spirits who tempt and torment men, and teach the maidens ensnaring songs, and lighten their feet and their heads for the wanton dance?"

"Stay, I pray thee," said the spirit;

"there are spirits of evil men and of good men made perfect, who are permitted to visit the earth, and power is given them for a time to work their will with men. I beheld one of the latter even now, a bold one and a noble; but he sees I mean not to harm thee, so we shall not war together."

At this assurance of protection, the pastor inclined his shuddering steed closer to his companion, and thus he proceeded:—

"You have said that my sect—my meek and lowly, and broken, and long persecuted remnant—have helped to people the profound hell; am I to credit thy words?"

"Credit them or not as thou wilt," said the spirit; "whoso spilleth blood by the sword, by the word, and by the pen, is there: the false witness; the misinterpreter of the Gospel; the profane poet; the profane and presumptuous preacher; the slayer and the slain; the persecutor and the persecuted; he who died at the stake, and he who piled the faggot;—all are there, enduring hard weird and penal fire for a time reckoned and days numbered. They are there whom thou wottest not of," said the confiding spirit, drawing near as he spoke, and whispering the names of some of the worthies of the Kirk, and the noble, and the far-descended.

"I well believe thee," said the pastor; "but I beseech thee to be more particular in thy information: give me the names which some of the chief ministers of woe in the nether world were known by in this. I shall hear of those who built cathedrals and strongholds, and filled thrones spiritual and temporal."

"Ay, that thou wilt," said the spirit, "and the names of some of the mantled professors of God's humble Presbyterian Kirk also; those who preached a burning fire and a devouring hell to their dissenting brethren, and who called out with a loud voice, 'Perdition to the sons and daughters of men; draw the sword; slay and smite utterly.'"

"Thou art a false spirit assuredly," said the pastor; "yet tell me one thing. Thy steed and thou seem to be as one, to move as one, and I observed thee even now conversing with thy brute part; dost thou ride on a punished spirit, and is there injustice in hell as well as on earth?"

The spirit laughed.

"Knowest thou not this patient and obedient spirit on whom I ride?—what wouldst thou say if I named a name renowned at the holy altar? the name of one who loosed the sword on the bodies of men, because they believed in a humble Saviour, and he believed in a lofty. I have bestrode that mitred personage before now; he is the hack to all the Presbyterians in the pit, but he cannot be spared on a journey so distant as this."

"So thou wilt not tell me the name of thy steed?" said Ezra; "well, even as thou wilt."

"Nay," said the spirit, "I shall not deny so good a man so small a matter. Knowest thou not George Johnstone, the captain of my troop,—as bold a hand as ever bore a sword and used it among fanatics? We lived together in life, and in death we are not divided."

"In persecution and in punishment, thou mightest have said, thou scoffing spirit," said the pastor. "But tell me, do men lord it in perdition as they did on earth; is there no retributive justice among the condemned spirits?"

"I have condescended on that already," said the spirit, "and I will tell thee further: there is thy old acquaintance and mine, George Gordon; punished and condemned though he be, he is the scourge, and the whip, and the rod of fire to all those brave and valiant men who served those equitable and charitable princes, Charles Stewart, and James, his brother."

"I suspect why those honourable

cavaliers are tasting the cup of punishment," said the pastor; "but what crime has sedate and holy George done that his lot is cast with the wicked?"

"Canst thou not guess it, holy Ezra?" answered the spirit. "His crime was so contemptible and mean that I scorn to name it. Hast thou any further questions?"

"You spoke of Charles Stuart, and James, his brother," said the pastor; "when sawest thou the princes for whom thou didst deluge thy country with blood, and didst peril thine own soul?"

"Ah! thou cunning querist," said the spirit, with a laugh; "canst thou not ask a plain question? Thou askest questions plain and pointed enough of the backsliding damsels of thy congregation—why shouldst thou put thy sanctified tricks on me, a plain and straightforward spirit, as ever uttered response to the godly? Nevertheless, I will tell thee; I saw them not an hour ago—Charles saddled me my steed; wot ye who held my stirrup?—even James, his brother. I asked them if they had any message to the devout people of their ancient kingdom of Scotland. The former laughed, and bade me bring him the kirk repentance-stool for a throne. The latter looked grave, and muttered over his fingers like a priest counting his beads; and hell echoed far and wide with laughter at the two princes."

"Ay, ay!" said the pastor; "so I find you have mirth among you: have you dance and song also?"

"Ay, truly," answered the spirit; "we have hymns and hallelujahs from the lips of that holy and patriotic band who banished their native princes, and sold their country to an alien; and the alien himself rules and reigns among them; and when they are weary with the work of praise, certain inferior and officious spirits moisten their lips with cupfuls of a curious and cooling liquid, and then hymn and thanksgiving recommence again."

"Ah, thou dissembler," said the minister; "and yet I see little cause why they should be redeemed, when so many lofty minds must wallow with the sinful for a season. But, tell me; it is long since I heard of Claud Hamilton,—have you seen him among you? He was the friend and follower of the alien—a mocker of the mighty minds of his native land—a scoffer of that gifted and immortal spirit which pours the glory of Scotland to the uttermost ends of the earth—tell me of him, I pray."

Loud laughed the spirit, and replied in scorn—

"We take no note of things so mean and unworthy as he; he may be in some hole in perdition, for aught I know or care. But, stay; I will answer thee truly. He has not passed to our kingdom yet; he is condemned to the punishment of a long and useless life on earth; and even now you will find him gnawing his flesh in agony to hear the name he has sought to cast down renowned over all the earth."

The spirit now seemed impatient to be gone; they had emerged from the glen; and vale and lea, brightened by the moon, and sown thick with evening dew, sparkled far and wide.

"If thou wouldst question me farther," said the frank and communicative spirit of Bonshaw, "and learn more of the dead, meet me in the old burial-ground an hour before moon-rise on Sunday night: tarry at home if thou wilt; but I have more to tell thee than thou knowest to ask about; and hair of thy head shall not be harmed."

Even as he spoke the shape of horse and rider underwent a sudden transformation—the spirit sank into the shape of a steed, the steed rose into the form of the rider, and wrapping his visionary mantle about him, and speaking to his unearthly horse, away he started, cast-

ing as he flew a sudden and fiery glance on the astonished pastor, who muttered, as he concluded a brief prayer,—

"There goes Captain George Johnstone, riding on his fierce old master!"

Chapter III.

The old burial-ground, the spirit's trysting-place, was a fair but a lonely spot. All around lay scenes renowned in tradition for blood, and broil, and secret violence. The parish was formerly a land of warrior's towers, and of houses for penance, and vigil, and mortification. But the Reformation came, and sacked and crushed down the houses of devotion; while the peace between the two kingdoms curbed the courage, and extinguished for ever the military and predatory glory of those old Galwegian chieftains. It was in a burial-ground pertaining to one of those ancient churches, and where the peasants still loved to have their dust laid, that Ezra trusted to meet again the shadowy representative of the fierce old Laird of Bonshaw.

The moon, he computed, had a full hour to travel before her beams would be shed on the place of conference, and to that eerie and deserted spot Ezra was observed to walk like one consecrating an evening hour to solitary musing on the rivulet side. No house stood within half a mile; and when he reached the little knoll on which the chapel formerly stood, he sat down on the summit to ponder over the way to manage this singular conference. A firm spirit, and a pure heart, he hoped, would confound and keep at bay the enemy of man's salvation; and he summed up, in a short historical way, the names of those who had met and triumphed over the machinations of fiends. Thus strengthened and reassured, he rose and looked around, but he saw no approaching shape. The road along which he expected the steed and rider to come was empty; and he walked towards the broken gate, to cast himself in the way, and show with what confidence he abode his coming.

Over the wall of the churchyard, repaired with broken and carved stones from the tombs and altar of the chapel, he now looked, and it was with surprise that he saw a new made widow kneeling over her husband's grave, and about to pour out her spirit in lamentation and sorrow. He knew her form and face, and the deepest sorrow came upon him. She was the daughter of an old and a faithful elder: she had married a seafaring youth, and borne him one fair child. Her husband was returning from a distant voyage; had entered the sea of Solway; his native hills—his own home—rose to his view, and he saw the light streaming from the little chamber window, where his wife and his sweet child sat awaiting his return. But it was not written that they were to meet again in life. She heard the sweep of a whirlwind, and she heard a shriek, and going to her chamber-door, she saw the ship sinking, and her husband struggling in the agitated water. It is needless to lengthen a sorrowful story: she now threw herself weeping over his grave, and poured out the following wail:—

"He was the fairest among men, yet the sea swept him away: he was the kindest hearted, yet he was not to remain. What were all other men compared to him,—his long curling hair, and his sweet hazel eyes, and his kind and gladsome tongue? He loved me long, and he won me from many rivals; for who could see his face, and not love him? who could listen to his speech, and refuse him aught?

When he danced, maids stood round, and thought his feet made richer music than the instruments. When he sang, the maids and matrons blessed him; and high-born dames loved the song of my frank and gentle sailor. But there is no mercy in the ocean for the sons of men; and there is nought but sorrow for their daughters. Men go gray-headed to the grave, who, had they trusted the unstable deeps, would have perished in their prime, and left fatherless babes, and sorrowing widows. Alas, alas! in lonely night, on this cerie spot, on thy low and early grave, I pour forth my heart! Who now shall speak peace to my mind, and open the latch of my little lonely home with thy kind and anxious hand? Who now shall dandle my sweet babe on his knee, or love to go with me to kirk and to preaching,—to talk over our old tales of love and courtship,—of the secret tryst and the bridal joy!"

And, concluding her melancholy chant, she looked sorrowfully and steadfastly at the grave, and recommenced anew her wailing and her tears.

The widow's grief endured so long that the moon began to make her approach manifest by shooting up a long and a broad stream of thin, lucid, and trembling light over the eastern ridge of the Cumberland hills. She rose from her knees, shed back her moist and disordered locks, showing a face pale but lovely, while the watery light of two large dark eyes, of liquid and roving blue, was cast mournfully on the way homewards, down which she now turned her steps to be gone. Of what passed in the pastor's mind at this moment, tradition, which sometimes mocks, and at other times deifies, the feelings of men, gives a very unsatisfactory account. He saw the hour of appointment with his shadowy messenger from the other world arrive and pass without his appearance; and he was perhaps persuaded that the pure, and pious, and overflowing grief of the fair young widow had prevented the intrusion of a form so ungracious and unholy. As she advanced from the burial-ground, the pastor of her parish stood mute and sorrowful before her. She passed him as one not wishing to be noticed, and glided along the path with a slow step and a downcast eye.

She had reached the side of a little lonely stream, which glided half seen, half hid, underneath its banks of broom and honeysuckle, sprinkled at that hour with wild daisies, and spotted with primroses—when the voice of Ezra reached her ears. She made a full stop, like one who hears something astounding, and turned round on the servant of the altar a face radiant with tears, to which her tale of woe, and the wild and lonely place, added an interest and a beauty.

"Young woman," he began, "it is unseemly in thee to bewail thy loss at this lonely hour, and in this dreary spot: the youth was given to thee, and ye became vain. I remarked the pride of thy looks, and the gaudiness of thine apparel, even in the house of holiness; he is taken from thee, perhaps, to punish thy pride. There is less meekness in thy sorrow than there was reason in thy joy; but be ye not discomforted."

Here the weeping lady turned the sidelong glance of her swimming eyes on Ezra, shed back the locks which usurped a white brow and snowy temples, and folding her hands over a bosom, the throbbings of which made the cambric that concealed it undulate like water, stood still, and drank in his words of comfort and condolence.

Tradition always conducts Ezra and the mariner's widow to this seldom frequented place. A hundred and a hundred times have I mused over the scene in sunlight and moonlight; a hundred and a hundred times have I

hearkened to the wild and variable accounts of the peasantry, and sought to make bank, and bush, and stream, and tree assist in unravelling the mystery which must still hang over the singular and tragic catastrophe. Standing in this romantic place, a pious man, not over-stricken in years, conversing with a rosy young widow, a vain and a fair creature, a bank of blossomed flowers beside them, and the new risen moon scattering her slant and ineffectual beams on the thick budded branches above them,—such is the picture which tradition invariably draws, while imagination endeavours to take up the tender thread of the story, and imagination must have this licence still. Truth contents herself with the summary of a few and unsatisfactory particulars. The dawn of morning came, says Truth, and Ezra had not returned to his manse. Something evil hath happened, said Imagination, scattering as she spoke a thousand tales of a thousand hues, many of which still find credence among the pious people of Galloway.

Josiah, the old and faithful servant of Ezra, arrived in search of his master at the lonely burial-ground, about the dawn of the morning. He had become alarmed at his long absence, and his alarm was not abated by the unholy voices which at midnight sailed round the manse and kirk, singing, as he imagined, a wild and infernal hymn of joy and thanksgiving. He traced his steps down the footpath by the rivulet side till he came to the little primrose bank, and found it trodden upon and pressed as if two persons had been seated among the flowers. Here all further traces ceased, and Josiah stood pondering on the power of evil spirits, and the danger of holding tryst with Beelzebub or any of the lesser spirits of darkness.

He was soon joined by an old shepherd, who told a tale which pious men refuse to believe, though they always listen to it. The bright moonlight had made him imagine it was morning, and he arose and walked forth to look at his lambs on the distant hill—the moon had been up for nearly an hour. His way lay near the little lonely primrose bank, and as he walked along he heard the whispering of tongues: he deemed it some idle piece of lovemaking, and he approached to see who they might be. He saw what ought not to be seen, even the reverend Ezra seated on the bank, and conversing with a buxom young dame and a strange one. They were talking wondrous kindly. He observed them for a little space; the young dame was in widow's weeds; the mariner's widow wore the only weeds, praise be blest, in the parish, but she was a raven to a swan compared to the quean who conversed with the minister. She was indeed passing fair, and the longer he looked on her she became the lovelier—ower lovely for mere flesh and blood. His dog shrunk back and whimpered, and an owl that chased a bird in the grove uttered a scream of terror as it beheld her, and forsook its prey. At length she turned the light of her eyes on himself; Will-o'-the-wisp was but a proverb to them; they had a glance he should never get the better of, and he hardly thought his legs carried him home, he flew with such supernatural speed.

"But, indeed," added the cautious peasant, "I have some doubts that the whole was a fiction of the auld enemy, to make me think ill of the douce man and the godly; and if he be spared to come home, so I shall tell him. But if Ezra, pious man, is heard of nae mair, I shall be free to believe that what I heard I heard, and what I saw I saw. And Josiah, man, I may as weel give you the benefit of my own opinion. I'll amaist aver on my Bible, that the minister, a daring man and a courageous, —ower courageous, I doubt,—has been dared out to the lonely place by some

he, or, maybe, she-fiend—the latter maist likely; and there he has been overcome by might or temptation, and now Satan may come atween the stilts of the gospel plough, for the right hand of Ezra will hold it no longer; or I shouldna wonder," added the shepherd, "but that the old dour persecutor Bonshaw has carried him away on his fiend-steed Geordie Johnstone; conscience! nought mair likely; and I'll warrant even now they are ducking him in the dub of perdition, or picking his banes ahint the hallan o' hell."

The whole of this rustic prediction was not fulfilled. In a little deep wild dell, at the distance of a gunshot, they found Ezra Peden lying on the ground, uttering words which will be pardoned, since they were the words of a delirious tongue. He was carried home amid the sympathy and sorrow of his parishioners; he answered no question, nor seemed to observe a single face, though the face of many a friend stood round him. He only raved out words of tenderness and affection, addressed to some imaginary person at his side; and concluded by starting up, and raising such an outcry of horror and amazement, as if the object of his regard had become a demon: seven strong men could hardly hold him. He died on the third day, after making a brief disclosure, which may be readily divined from this hasty and imperfect narrative.

YOUNG RONALD OF MORAR:

A TRADITIONARY TALE OF THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS.

ANGUS MACDONALD, a son of Clanranald, having quarrelled with his neighbour and namesake, the Laird of Morar, he made an irruption into that district, at the head of a select portion of his followers. One of his men was celebrated for his dexterity as a marksman; and on their march he gave a proof of this, by striking the head off the *canna*, or moss cotton, with an arrow. This plant is common on mossy ground in the Highlands; it is as white as the driven snow, and not half the size of the lily.

Having got possession of the cattle, Angus was driving away the *spreith* to his own country; but Dugald of Morar pursued him with a few servants who happened to be at hand; and, being esteemed a man of great bravery, Angus had no wish to encounter him. He ordered the marksman to shoot him with an arrow; but the poor fellow, being unwilling to injure Dugald, aimed high, and overshot him. Angus observed this, and expressed his surprise that a man who could hit the *canna* yesterday, could not hit Dugald's broad forehead that day; and drawing his sword, swore that he would cleave the marksman's head should he miss him again. John then reluctantly drew his bow, and Dugald fell to rise no more.

Angus got into his hands the only son of the dreaded Morar, then very young; and the treatment which the unfortunate boy received was calculated to injure his health and shorten his life. A poor girl, who attended the calves, had pity on him, and at last contrived to carry him away, wrapped up in a large fleece of wool. Having escaped from her pursuers, she made her way to the house of Cameron of Lochiel. Here she and the boy were most hospitably received; and, according to the custom of the country in those days, they passed a year and a day without being asked

any question. At the end of that period, Lochiel made inquiry regarding the boy, and the girl candidly told him her story. He thus discovered that the boy was the son of his own wife's sister; but he concealed the whole from his lady, of whose secrecy he was not very confident. But he treated young Ronald with great kindness. Lochiel had a son much of the same age; the two boys frequently quarrelled, and the lady was angry to see her own son worsted. She at last swore that "the girl and her vagabond must quit the house next morning." The generous Lochiel set out with the boy to Inverness, where he boarded him under a false name, and placed the woman in the service of a friend in the neighbourhood, that she might have an eye to his condition.

Ronald received such education as befitted his birth; and when he grew up to manhood, he paid a visit to Lochiel, his kind benefactor, in Lochaber, who was so much satisfied with him, that he determined on giving him his powerful assistance in recovering his paternal estate, which was then in the possession of Angus.

Lochiel ordered a hundred men to attend himself and Ronald on this occasion; and they arrived in Morar on a Sunday, when the usurper and all his people were in church at mass. He congratulated the young man on the opportunity he now had of avenging his father's blood, and destroying all his enemies at once, by burning them in the church. Ronald humanely objected, that though many of those persons then in the church were guilty of his father's death, yet there were others innocent of that crime; and he declared that if his estate could not be recovered otherwise, he would rather want it, and trust to Providence and his own valour. Lochiel did not at all relish such sentiments, and left Ronald to his fate.

Ronald took refuge in a cavern, and the daughter of Angus, his only child, frequently passed that way, in looking after her father's fold. He sometimes got into conversation with her; and, though but a child, she became attached to him. He prevailed upon her to get his shirts washed for him. Her father having accidentally discovered the linen bleaching, observed the initial letters of Ronald's name; and making inquiry into the circumstances, soon suspected that he was at hand. He attempted to persuade his daughter to decoy Ronald into his power; but she told the young man all that her father proposed to her; and he, finding that Angus was still thirsting for his blood, immediately left the country, and took the girl along with him. With much difficulty he conveyed her in safety to Inverness, from whence he procured a passage to France, where he placed her in a convent. He entered the French army, and was much distinguished for his bravery; he was thus enabled to support himself, and to defray the expense of her education. When the young woman was of age, they were married, and returned to Scotland. Ronald having obtained strong recommendations to the king, he found means of being reconciled to Angus, who was then old, and had become very penitent. He made great professions of friendship and attachment to Ronald; but his daughter was always doubtful of his sincerity, and it would appear that she had justly appreciated his disposition. One night, Ronald having feigned intoxication and retired to rest, the old barbarian calculated that he would sleep very soundly, and slunk into his apartment, armed with a dirk, to stab his son-in-law; but the young man watched the treacherous hypocrite, and put him to death. Ronald obtained possession of his paternal estate, and, after a long and prosperous life, became the founder of a very respectable family.—*Lit. Gazette.*

THE BROKEN RING.

BY ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF THE "ODD VOLUME."

"HOUT, lassie," said the wily Dame Seton to her daughter, "dinna blear your een wi' greeting. What would honest Maister Binks say, if he were to come in the now, and see you looking baith dull and dour? Dight your een, my bairn, and snood back your hair—I'se warrant you'll mak a bonnier bride than ony o' your sisters."

"I carena whether I look bonny or no, since Willie winna see me," said Mary, while her eyes filled with tears. "Oh, mother, ye have been ower hasty in this matter; I canna help thinking he will come hame yet, and make me his wife. It's borne in on my mind that Willie is no dead."

"Put awa such thoughts out o' your head, lassie," answered her mother; "nacbody doubts but yoursel that the ship that he sailed in was whumelled ower in the saut sea—what gars you threep he's leeving that gate?"

"Ye ken, mother," answered Mary, "that when Willie gaed awa on that wearifu' voyage, 'to mak the crown a pound,' as the auld sang says, he left a kist o' his best claes for me to tak care o'; for he said he would keep a' his braws for a day that's no like to come, and that's our bridal. Now, ye ken it's said, that as lang as the moths keep aff folk's claes, the owner o' them is no dead,—so I e'en took a look o' his bit things the day, and there's no a broken thread among them."

"Ye had little to do to be howking among a dead man's claes," said her mother; "it was a bonny like job for a bride."

"But I'm no a bride," answered Mary, sobbing. "How can ye hae the heart to speak o't, mother, and the year no out since I broke a ring wi' my ain Willie!—Weel hae I keepit my half o't; and if Willie is in this world, he'll hae the other as surely."

"I trust poor Willie is in a better place," said the mother, trying to sigh; "and since it has been ordered sae, ye maun just settle your mind to take honest Maister Binks; he's rich, Mary, my dear bairn, and he'll let ye want for naething."

"Riches canna buy true love," said Mary.

"But they can buy things that will last a hantle longer," responded the wily mother; "so, Mary, ye maun tak him, if you would hae me die in peace. Ye ken I can leave ye but little. The house and bit garden maun gang to your brother, and his wife will mak him keep a close hand;—she'll soon let you see the cauld shouther. Poor relations are unco little thought o'; so, lassie, as ye would deserve my benison, dinna keep simmering it and wintering it any longer, but take a gude offer when it's made ye."

"I'll no hae him till the year is out," cried Mary. "Wha kens but the ship may cast up yet?"

"I fancy we'll hae to gie you your ain gate in this matter," replied the dame, "mair especially as it wants but three weeks to the year, and we'll need that to hae ye cried in the kirk, and to get a' your braws ready."

"Oh, mother, mother, I wish ye would let me die!" was Mary's answer, as she flung herself down on her little bed.

Delighted at having extorted Mary's consent to the marriage, Dame Seton quickly conveyed the happy intelligence to her son-in-law elect, a wealthy burgess of Dunbar; and having invited Annot Cameron, Mary's cousin, to visit them, and assist her in cheering the

sorrowful bride, the preparations for the marriage proceeded in due form.

On the day before that appointed for the wedding, as the cousins sat together, arranging the simple ornaments of the bridal dress, poor Mary's feelings could no longer be restrained, and her tears fell fast.

"Dear sake, Mary, gie ower greeting," said Annot; "the bonny white satin ribbon is wringing wet."

"Sing her a canty sang to keep up her heart," said Dame Seton.

"I canna bide a canty sang the day, for there's ane rinnin' in my head that my poor Willie made ae night as we sat beneath the rowan-tree outby there, and when we thought we were to gang hand in hand through this weariu' world," and Mary began to sing in a low voice.

At this moment the door of the dwelling opened, and a tall, dark-complexioned woman entered, and saying, "My benison on a' here," she seated herself close to the fire, and lighting her pipe, began to smoke, to the great annoyance of Dame Seton.

"Gudewife," said she gruffly, "ye're spoiling the lassie's gown, and raising such a reek, so here's an awmous to ye, and you'll just gang your ways, we're unco thrang the day."

"Nae doubt," rejoined the spaewife, "a bridal time is a thrang time, but it should be a heartsome ane too."

"And hae ye the ill-manners to say it's otherwise?" retorted Dame Seton. "Gang awa wi' ye, without anither bidding; ye're making the lassie's braws as black as coom."

"Will ye hae yer fortune spaed, my bonny May?" said the woman, as she seized Mary's hand.

"Na, na," answered Mary, "I ken it but ower weel already."

"You'll be married soon, my bonny lassie," said the sibyl.

"Hech, sirs, that's piper's news, I trow," retorted the dame, with great contempt; "can ye no tell us something better worth the hearing?"

"Maybe I can," answered the spaewife. "What would you think if I were to tell you that your daughter keeps the half o' the gold ring she broke wi' the winsome sailor lad near her heart by night and by day?"

"Get out o' my house, ye tinkler!" cried Dame Seton, in wrath; "we want to hear nae such clavers."

"Ye wanted news," retorted the fortune-teller; "and I trow I'll gie ye mair than you'll like to hear. Hark ye, my bonnie lassie, ye'll be married soon, but no to Jamie Binks,—here's an anchor in the palm of your hand, as plain as a pikestaff."

"Awa wi' ye, ye leein' Egyptian that ye are," cried Dame Seton, "or I'll set the dog on you, and I'll promise ye he'll no leave ae dud on your back to mend another."

"I wadna rede ye to middle wi' me, Dame Seton," said the fortune-teller. "And now, having said my say, and wishing ye a blithe bridal, I'll just be stepping awa;" and ere another word was spoken, the gipsy had crossed the threshold.

"I'll no marry Jamie Binks," cried Mary, wringing her hands; "send to him, mother, and tell him sae."

"The sorrow take the lassie," said Dame Seton; "would you make yoursel and your friends a warld wonder, and a' for the clavers o' a leein' Egyptian,—black be her fa', that I should ban."

"Oh, mother, mother!" cried Mary, "how can I gie ae man my hand, when another has my heart?"

"Troth, lassie," replied her mother, "a living joe is better than a dead ane ony day. But whether Willie be dead or living, ye shall be Jamie Binks' wife the morn. Sae tak nae thought o' that ill-deedy body's words, but gang ben the house and dry your een, and Annot will put the last steek in your bonny white gown."

With a heavy heart Mary saw the

day arrive which was to seal her fate; and while Dame Seton is bustling about, getting everything in order for the ceremony, which was to be performed in the house, we shall take the liberty of directing the attention of our readers to the outside passengers of a stage-coach, advancing from the south, and rapidly approaching Dunbar. Close behind the coachman was seated a middle-aged, substantial-looking farmer, with a round, fat, good-humoured face, and at his side was placed a handsome young sailor, whose frank and jovial manner, and stirring tale of shipwreck and captivity, had pleasantly beguiled the way.

"And what's taking you to Dunbar the day, Mr Johnstone?" asked the coachman.

"Just a wedding, John," answered the farmer. "My cousin, Jamie Binks, is to be married the night."

"He has been a wee ower lang about it," said the coachman.

"I'm thinking," replied the farmer, "it's no the puir lassie's fault that the wedding hasna been put off langer; they say that bonny Mary has little gude will to her new joe."

"What Mary is that you are speaking about?" asked the sailor.

"Oh, just bonny Mary Seton that's to be married the night," answered the farmer.

"Whew!" cried the sailor, giving a long whistle.

"I doubt," said the farmer, "she'll be but a waefu' bride, for the sough gangs that she hasna forgotten an auld joe; but ye see he was away, and no likely to come back, and Jamie Binks is weel to pass in the world, and the mother, they say, just made her life bitter till the puir lassie was driven to say she would take him. It is no right in the mother, but folks say she is a dour wife, and had aye an ee to the siller."

"Right!" exclaimed the young sailor, "she deserves the cat-o'-nine tails!"

"Whisht, whisht, laddie," said the farmer. "Preserve us! where is he gaun?" he continued, as the youth sprung from the coach and struck across the fields.

"He'll be taking the short cut to the town," answered the coachman, giving his horses the whip.

The coach whirled rapidly on, and the farmer was soon set down at Dame Seton's dwelling, where the whole of the bridal party was assembled, waiting the arrival of the minister.

"I wish the minister would come," said Dame Seton.

"We must open the window," answered Annot, "for Mary is like to swarf awa."

This was accordingly done, and as Mary sat close by the window, and gasping for breath, an unseen hand threw a small package into her lap.

"Dear sirs, Mary," said Dame Seton, "open up the bit parcel, bairn; it will be a present frae your Uncle Sandie; it's a queer way o' gieing it, but he ne'er does things like ony ither body." The bridal guests gathered round Mary as she slowly undid fold after fold. "Hech!" observed Dame Seton, "it maun be something very precious to be in such sma' bouk." The words were scarcely uttered when the half of a gold ring lay in Mary's hand.

"Where has this come frae?" exclaimed Mary, wringing her hands. "Has the dead risen to upbraid me?"

"No, Mary, but the living has come to claim you," cried the young sailor, as he vaulted through the open window, and caught her in his arms.

"Oh, Willie, Willie, where hae ye been a' this weary time?" exclaimed Mary, while the tears fell on her pale cheek.

"That's a tale for another day," answered the sailor; "I can think of nothing but joy while I haud you to

my breast, which you will never leave mair."

"There will be twa words to that bargain, my joe," retorted Dame Seton. "Let go my bairn, and gang awa wi' ye; she's trysted to be this honest man's wife, and his wife she shall be."

"Na, na, mistress," said the bridegroom, "I hae nae broo o' wedding another man's joe: since Willie Fleming has her heart, he may e'en tak her hand for me."

"Gude save us," cried the farmer, shaking the young sailor by the hand; "little did I ken wha I was speaking to on the top of the coach. I say, guidwife," he continued, "ye maun just let Willie tak her; nae gude e'er yet come o' crossing true love."

"'Deed, that's a truth," was answered by several bonny bridesmaids. Dame Seton, being deserted by her allies, and finding the stream running so strongly against her, at length gave an unwilling consent to the marriage of the lovers, which was celebrated amidst general rejoicings; and at the request of his bride, Willie, on his wedding-day, attired himself in the clothes which the moths had so considerately spared for the happy occasion.

A PASSAGE OF MY LIFE.

MAIDEN aunts are very tough. Their very infirmities seem to bring about a new term of life. They are like old square towers—nobody knows when they were built, and nobody knows when they will tumble down. You may unroof them, unfloor them, knock in their casements, and break down their doors, till the four old black walls stand, and stand through storm and sunshine year after year, till the eye, accustomed to contemplate the gradual decay of everything else, sickens to look at this anomaly in nature. My aunt, dear good soul, seemed resolved never to die,—at least to outlive her hopeful nephew. I thought she was to prove as perdurable as a dried mummy,—she was by this time equally yellow and exsiccated as any of the daughters of Pharaoh.

I had run myself quite aground. But my extravagances, as well as my distresses, I had the policy to conceal from my aged relative. She, honest lady, occasionally had pressed me to accept of some slight pittances of two or three £50's at different times, which, after much difficulty and entreaty, I made a merit of accepting, stoutly asserting that I only received them to avoid hurting her feelings—that my own income was amply sufficient for the limited wants of a scholar, or to any one who could put in practice the rules of wholesome economy; but this trifle certainly would enable me to purchase a few rather expensive publications which I could not otherwise have hoped to do, and which would prove of essential use in furthering the progress of the two great works I had commenced while at college, and had been busy with ever since, viz.: "A History of Antediluvian Literature, Arts, and Sciences," and "A Dissertation on the Military Tactics of the Assyrians," which I intended should appear along with the last volume of Valpy's Greek Dictionary, or the first of Sir James Mackintosh's History of Great Britain.

Fortune at last grew tired of persecuting me; she fairly turned her wheel, and put me on the brightest spoke. My aunt's factor called one day, and

let me know that he thought I should make my visits at Broadcroft more frequent—take a little interest in looking over the ditching and draining of the estate (short-sighted man, he little knew how much I had ditched and drained it by anticipation!)—walk through the woods and plantations, and bestow my opinion as to thinning them (they were long ago, in my own mind, transferred to the timber-yard)—apply myself a little to master the details of business connected with agricultural affairs, such as markets, green and white crops, manure, &c. &c.; and concluded by telling me that his son was a remarkably clever lad, knew country matters exceedingly well, and would be a most valuable acquisition as factor or land grieve to any gentleman of extensive landed property. The drift of this communication I perfectly understood. I listened with the most profound attention, lamented my own ignorance of the subjects wherein his clever son was so much at home, and wished only that I had an estate, that I might entrust it to the care of so intelligent a steward. After dispatching a bottle or two of claret, we parted mutually pleased.

He had seen my aunt's will, and, in the fulness of his heart, ran over the legal jargon which constituted me the owner of Broadcroft, Lilliesacre, Kittleford, Westerha', Cozieholm, Harperston, and Oxgang, with hale parts and pendicles, woods and fishings, mills and mill-lands, muirs and mosses, rights of pasturage and commonty. I never heard more delightful music all my days than the hour I spent hearkening to this old rook cawing over the excellent lands that were mine in prospective. My aunt's letters, after this, I found assumed a querulous tone, and became strongly impregnated with religious commonplaces—a sure sign to me that she herself was now winding up her earthly affairs—and generally concluded with some such sentence as this: "I am in a comfortable frame of spirit, but my fleshly tabernacle is sorely decayed—great need hath it of a sure prop in the evening of its days." These epistles I regularly answered, seasoning them with scriptural texts as well as I could. Some, to be sure, had no manner of connection or application whatsoever; but I did not care for that if they were there. I stuck them thick and threefold, for I knew my aunt was an indulgent critic, provided she got plenty of matter. I took the precaution also of paying the postage, for I learned, with something like satisfaction, that of late she had become rather parsimonious in her habits. I also heard that she daily took much comfort in the soul-searching and faith-fortifying discourses of Mr Samuel Salmasius Sickerscreed, a migratory preacher of some denomination or other, who had found it convenient for some months to pitch his tent in the Broadcroft. Several of my aunt's letters told me, in no measured terms, her high opinion of his edifying gifts. With these opinions, as a matter of course, I warmly coincided. Sheet after sheet now poured in from Broadcroft. I verily thought all the worthy divines, from the Reformation downwards, had been put in requisition to batter me to pieces with choice and ghostly counsel.

This infliction I bore up against with wonderful fortitude, and repaid with my weightiest metal. To supply the extraordinary drafts thus made on my stores of devout phraseology, I had to call in my worthy friend Tom ——. He had been a regularly-bred theologian, but finding the casque more fitting for his hot head than the presbyter's cowl, he now lived in elegant starvation as a dashing cornet in the —— Dragoons, and a better fellow never breathed. His assistance was of eminent service: when we exhausted our own invention, we immediately transcribed the sermon of some forgotten divine of last century,

and sent it thundering off. These we denominated *shells*. At this time Tom's fortune and mine were hanging on the same pin; we were both up to the chin in debt; we had stretched our respective personal credits, as far as they would go, for each other. We were involved in such a beautiful multitude and labyrinth of mutual obligations, that we could neither count them nor see our way out of them. In the holy siege of Broadcroft citadel we therefore joined heart and hand.

In this manner things went on smoothly. My aunt was becoming daily weaker, seldom left her own bedroom, and permitted no person to see her save the Rev. S. S. Sickerscreed. Indeed, every letter I received from my aunt intimated more plainly than its predecessor that I might make up my mind for a great and sudden change, and prepare myself for afflictions. As in duty bound, my answers breathed of sorrow and resignation—lamented the mutability of this world—its nothingness—the utter vanity of all earthly joys. I really loved the good old lady; but I was hampered most villanously. I knew not a spot where I could put the sole of my foot, without some legal mine blowing me up a shivered rag into the azure firmament,—a fate a thousand times more picturesque than pleasant. I may therefore be excused for confessing that I looked upon my aunt's release from this world as the dawn of my own deliverance. Yet, even then, I felt shame when I looked into the chambers of my heart, and found that every feeling of grief I had there for my aunt's illness was beautifully edged with a gleam of satisfaction. The cypresses and yews, and other mournful trees that threw their pensive shadows around me, were positively resting above a burning volcano of joy. No; it was not in human nature for a desperate man like me to exclude from his contemplation the bills, bonds, moneys, and manors that had accumulated for years under her thrifty and prudent management.

One morning, while musing in this indescribable state of feeling, a little ragged boy, besmeared with dust and sweat, whom I recognised as turnspit and running footman of the establishment at Broadcroft, thrust a crumpled greasy-like billet in my hand.

"Come awa, laird, come awa, gin ye would like to see your auld auntie afore she gangs aff a'thegither."

I started up, threw down the "Sporting Magazine," and instinctively snatched up my hat.

"When did it happen, wee Jamie?"

"This morning, nae far'er gane—but come awa; everything's gaun tapsalteerie at Braidcraft—sae unexpected by us a'! Has your horse been fed yet? Dinna put aff, but come awa. We're a' dementit ower the way, and ye're muckle wanted, and sair missed."

With this wee Jamie darted away; I roared after him to obtain further particulars, but wee Jamie shot off like an arrow, only twisting his head over his shoulder, notwithstanding his trot, he screamed—

"Gerss maunna grow under my heels, if I care for my lugs. But it's a' by noo, and there's nae gude in granin'."

With which sapient remark the kitchen boy got out of hearing, and soon out of sight.

I now hastily broke the black wax of the billet. The note was subscribed by Mr S. S. Sickerscreed, and was written in his most formal small-text hand. He had been a schoolmaster in his youth, and could write legibly, which no gentleman who regards his *caste* should do. The three big S S S were dearer to me than a collar of knighthood. It required my immediate presence at Broadcroft to talk over certain serious and impressive matters. So had Mr Samuel Salmasius Sickerscreed penned his billet, and in the fulness of my heart I gave the poor man credit for

an excess of delicacy more than I ever noticed had belonged to him before. Poor dear man, he, too, has lost a valuable friend. Judging of the exquisiteness of my feelings by the agony of his own, he has kindly delayed the fatal announcement of my aunt's demise, till my heart has been prepared to meet the shock with becoming fortitude. How considerate—how very compassionate he has been! Worthy man—would I could repay his kindness with a benifice! Thus did I soliloquise over the dispatch from Broadcroft; but notwithstanding the tumult which it and its bearer raised in my bosom, I did not omit communicating to Tom the unexpected change which a few hours had produced in our destinies, and charging him at the same time to moderate his transports till I returned with a confirmation of our hopes.

Then backing my stoutest hunter, and taking a crow's flight across the country, I spared not her heaving flanks, nor drew bridle, till I reached the long, straight, dusky avenue that led to the tall, narrow slip of a house yclept Broadcroft Place. Here I slackened my pace, and left my wearied and panting brute to crawl as lazily as she liked along the avenue. I, too, lengthened my visage to the requisite degree necessary for the melancholy purpose on which I came. The very trees had a lugubrious and sepulchral aspect. I took them in fancy to be so many *Saxelics* waiting the time for heading the funeral procession of my lamented aunt. They seemed to mourn for her in sincere sorrow, and, in fact, walking under their shadows disposed my mind very much to melancholy. Now a green leaf, now a withered one, dropped on my beaver as I passed, and in the deep silence that reigned around me, I could not, despite my constitutional recklessness, be wholly insensible to the appeals these mute emblems of man's mortality made to reflection.

But a pleasanter train of feelings arose when I looked at the stately trunks of the venerable oaks, their immense girth, and (with a glow of patriotic virtue, quite common now-a-days) pictured forth to myself how admirably they were suited to bear Britannia's thunders triumphantly across the wave. Yes, every tree of them shall be devoted to the service of my country. Perish the narrow thought, that for its own gratification would allow them to vegetate in unprofitable uselessness, when they can be so beneficially employed for the state. Every old, druidical-looking oak which my eye scanned was, of course, devoted to the axe. I already saw the timber yards piled with Broadcroft oak, and the distant sea my imagination soon whitened with a fleet of noble barks wholly built of them. Thus did I speculate till I reached the end of the avenue, where, to my surprise, I found a travelling post-chaise and four drawn up before the door of the mansion. This vehicle, an apparition of rare occurrence in so secluded a part of the country, and at the residence of so retired a lady as my departed aunt, was literally crushed with trunks, and boxes, and bags, and packages of one kind or another, strapped above, behind, and before it.

Being never unfertile in surmises, I immediately guessed that the equipage I saw must, of necessity, belong to the clerk to the signet, my aunt's city lawyer, who had trundled himself into the country with the whole muniments of my estate, for the mere purpose of welcoming me, and regulating my deceased relative's affairs. His prompt appearance, I attributed, with my usual goodness of heart, to the kindly foresight of Mr Samuel. I really did not know how I could sufficiently recompense him for the warm, disinterested, and valuable services he had rendered in this season of affliction. But my aunt must have remembered him in her testament. She was ever grateful.

She cannot possibly have overlooked him. As the d—l would have it, I then asked myself, now, if your aunt has forgotten Mr Samuel Salmasius Sickerscreed altogether, how will you act? At first, I said he must have £100 at least; then as I looked on my own necessities, the uncertainty of rents, the exorbitance of taxes, this sum speedily subsided into half the amount. And by the time I fairly reached my aunt's door, I found my mind reconciling itself to the handsome duty of presenting Mr Sickerscreed with a snuff-box, value £2, 10s., a mourning ring worth 30s., a new coat, and ten guineas; in all, some twenty pieces of gold or thereby.

On alighting, I gave my horse to the servant to walk and cool. John was old as his late mistress—a very good, foolish, gray-headed domestic, marvellously fond of the family he served with, and marvellously fond of conversation. He looked profoundly melancholy when he took my reins.

"It'll be a sair dispensation to you, Maister William," quoth John, "this morning's news. Ye wud be wonderfully struck and put about when ye heard it."

"It is, indeed," said I, throwing as much of mournfulness as possible into the tones of my voice. "Heavy news indeed, and most unexpected. Great cause have I to grieve. My poor dear aunt to be thus lost to me for ever!"

"Nae doubt, nae doubt, Maister William, ye maun hae a heavy heartfu'. We were a' jalousing as muckle,—that's me, Souple Rab, and wee Jamie; however, it'll no do to be coosten down a'thegither,—a rainy night may bring a blithe morrow. Every thing is uncertain in this world but death! But come on, Kate;" and John and my reeking jade disappeared in the direction towards the stable; John, no doubt, bursting with impatience till he could communicate to his select cabinet, Souple Rab and wee Jamie, the awsome and doncie looks of the young laird.

I was yet lingering on the threshold in a most comfortable frame of mind, when the door was thrown open. Imagine my horror when the first figure I saw was my aunt herself, not in the drapery of the grave, but bedizzened with ribbons from head to heel, and leaning her withered hand on the arm of the Reverend Mr Sickerscreed. I gasped for breath—my tongue swelled and clung to the roof of my mouth—my eyes literally started from their sockets as if they would leave their bony casements altogether. Had I not caught hold of the porch, down I should have dropped.

"Am I in my senses, aunt? Do I see you really alive? Is this no unreal mockery—no cruel hallucination? Resolve me, for Heaven's sake, else I go mad."

"Dear me, nephew," said the old lady, "what agitates you so? I feel so glad that you have paid me this visit ere I set off on my marriage jaunt with the elect of my heart, your worthy connection, Mr Sickerscreed."

"Marriage!" thundered I, "marriage!—I came to mourn over your bier, not to laugh at your bridal. O, the infernal cruelty, Mr What's-your-name, to despatch your pharisaical letter sealed with black wax."

"Young wrathful," meekly rejoined Mr Samuel, "it was dark green wax, most emblematic, as I said to your aunt, my dear spouse, of the unfading verdure of our harmonious affections."

"Black and green fiends dog you to Satan," roared I. "What an ass you have made of me! Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness. Oh! Broadcroft, Lilliesacre, Kittleford, Cozieholm, and Oxgang, perished in the clap of a hand, and for ever! The churchman's paw is upon you, and a poor fellow has no chance now of a single rood!"

With some more stuff of this kind, I parted with my venerable aunt and her smooth-tongued spouse. These petri-

factions of humanity had the charity, I suppose, to consider me moon-struck. I heard Mr Samuel sweetly observe, that verily the young lad's scholarship had driven him mad. I wished the rogue at the bottom of the Red Sea, or in the farthest bog of Connaught, paring turf and cultivating potatoes—anywhere but where I now saw him. I could have eaten him up raw and unsodden, without salt or pepper, where he stood—ground his bones to dust, or spit upon him till he was drowned in the flood of my spite. I did neither; but throwing myself again on the back of Kate, off I scampered home, more like a fury than a man.

In my way there was not a rascal I met but seemed to my heated imagination to know my misfortunes, and enjoy, with sly satisfaction, their fearful consummation. Two fellows I cut smartly across the cheek; they were standing coolly by the wayside, with their hands in their pockets, interchanging winks, and thrusting their tongues provokingly out like hounds on a hot day. They did not relish the taste of my thong, and one of them made an awkward squelsh into a ditch on receipt, head over heels, immensely to my heart's content.

It was evening when I reached the little village where my head-quarters for some weeks had been established. To add to my miseries, I found that Tom had, in my absence, with his usual volatility of temperament, been entertaining a numerous party in the Cross Keys, on the faith of my accession of property. When I rode past the tavern, my ears were assailed with most extraordinary sounds of festivity, and my head endangered by a shower of bottles and glasses that his reckless boon companions were discharging from the windows. Some of these windows, too, were illuminated with multitudes of *dips* —the extravagant dog!—three to the pound. And some coarse transparencies were flaunting in my face pithy sentences, such as—"A Glorious Revolution," "Splendid Victory," "Jubilee to Hopeless Creditors," "Intelligence Extraordinary!!" &c. Then, at every pause of the maddening din, the explosion of another bottle of champagne smote my ear like a death-knell. Cork after cork popped against the ceiling—crack, crack, they went like a running fire along a line of infantry, while loud above the storm rose the vociferations of my jolly friend, as he cheered them on to another bumper, with all the honours, or volunteered his own song. Poor Tom, he had only one song, which he wrote himself, and never failed to sing to the deafening of every one when he was drunk. It was never printed, and here you have as much of it as I remember, to vary the melancholy texture of my story :—

SONG.

FILL a can, let us drink,
For 'tis nonsense to think
Of the cares that may come with to-morrow;
And 'tis folly as big
As the Chancellor's wig,
To dash present joy with dull sorrow.
Hip! hip! hip! fill away;
Our life's but a day,
And 'twere pity that it proved a sad one;
'Twas in a merry pin
Our life did begin,
And we'll close it, brave boys, in a mad one!
Hip! hip! hip! &c.

Never shrink, boys, but stand,
With a can in each hand,
Like a king with his globe and his sceptre;
And though slack in your joints,
Yet thus armed at all points,
The devil himself can't you capture.
Hip! hip! hip! fill aright,
Should he seek us to-night,
We'll toss off the old rogue as a whetter;
When the hot cinder's down,
Take my oath on't, you'll own,
That good luck could not furnish a better.
Hip! hip! hip! &c.

Dull sophists may say,
Who have ne'er wet their clay,
That merry old wine gives no bliss,
But the flask's sparkling high,
Gives the dotards the lie,

Crying, kiss me, my roaring lads, kiss!
Hip! hip! hip! jolly boys!
He who quarrels with those joys,
Which the longer they're sipped of grow sweeter,
May he live to be wise,
And then when he sighs
For a smack, let him choke with this metre.
Hip! hip! hip! &c.

This was followed with what Tom emphatically styled a grand crash of melody; that is, overturning the table, and burying in one indiscriminate ruin, bowls, bottles, glasses, and all things brittle.

My heart sickened at the riot, and, broken in spirit and penniless, I retreated to my lodgings.

Here I had at least peace to ruminate over my prostrate fortunes; but as meditation would not mend them, and next morning would assuredly bring the dire intelligence of my aunt's marriage, I, that same night, made a forced march, anxious to secure a convenient spot for rustication and retirement, till fortune should again smile, or the ferocity of my creditors be somwhat tamed. Poor Tom! I had the savage satisfaction of breaking up his carousal by a few cabalistic words written in a strong half-text hand: "Stole away! Done up.—Fooled and finished.—Run, if you love freedom, and hate stone walls. You will find me carthed in the old hole."

Next evening I was joined by my luckless shadow. He had a hard run for it; the scent lay strong, and the pack were sure-nosed and keen as razors. But he threw them out from his superior knowledge of localities. After this we both became exceedingly recluse and philosophical in our habits. We had the world to begin anew, and we had each our own very particular reasons for not making a noise about it. —*Paisley Magazine.*

THE COURT CAVE:

A LEGENDARY TALE OF FIFESHIRE.

By Drummond Bruce.

Chapter I.

A few years before the pride of Scotland had been prostrated by English bows and bills, on the disastrous day of Flodden, the holding of Balmeny, in the county of Fife, was possessed by Walter Colville, then considerably advanced in years. Walter Colville had acquired this small estate by the usual title to possession in the days in which he lived. When a mere stripling, he had followed the latest Earl of Douglas, when the banner of the bloody heart floated defiance to the Royal Stuart. But the wavering conduct of Earl James lost him at Abercorn the bravest of his adherents, and Walter Colville did not disdain to follow the example of the Knight of Cadzow. He was rewarded with the hand of the heiress of Balmeny, then a ward of Colville of East Wemyss. That baron could not of course hesitate to bestow her on one who brought the king's command to that effect; and in the brief wooing space of a summer day, Walter saw and loved the lands which were to reward his loyal valour, and wooed and wedded the maiden by law appended to the enjoyment of them. The marriage proved fruitful; for six bold sons

sprung up in rapid succession around his table, and one "fair May" being added at a considerable interval after, Walter felt, so far as his iron nature could feel, the pure and holy joys of parental love, as his eye lighted on the stalwart frames and glowing aspects of his boys, and on the mild blue eyes and blooming features of the young Edith, who, like a fair pearl set in a carcanet of jaspers, received an added lustre from her singleness. But alas for the stability of human happiness! The truth of the deep-seated belief that the instrument of our prosperity shall also be that of our decay, was mournfully displayed in the house of Walter Colville. By the sword had he cut his way to the station and wealth he now enjoyed; by the sword was his habitation rendered desolate, and his gray hairs whitened even before their time. On the field of Bannockburn—once the scene of a more glorious combat—three of his sons paid with their lives for their adherence to the royal cause. Two more perished with Sir Andrew Wood, when Steven Bull was forced to strike to the "Floure and Yellow Carvell." The last, regardless of entreaties and commands, followed the fortunes of the "White Rose of York," when Perkin Warbeck, as history malignantly continues to style the last Plantagenet, carried his fair wife and luckless cause to Ireland; and there young Colville found an untimely fate and bloody grave near Dublin.

Thus bereft of so many goodly objects of his secret pride, the heart of Walter Colville naturally sought to compensate the losses which it had sustained in an increased exercise of affection towards his daughter. The beauties of infancy had now been succeeded by those of ripening maidenhood. The exuberant laugh, which had so often cheered his hours of care or toil, while she was yet a child, had given place to a smile still more endearing to his time-stricken feelings; face and form had been matured into their most captivating proportions, and nothing remained of the blue-eyed, fair-haired child, that had once clung round his knee, save the artless openness of her disposition, and the unsullied purity of her heart. Yet, strange to tell, the very intensity of his affection was the source of bitter sorrow to her who was its object, and his misdirected desire to secure her happiness, threatened to blench, with the paleness of secret sorrow, the cheek it was his dearest wish to deck with an ever-during smile of happiness.

Edith Colville was but an infant when her three brothers fell at Sauchie, and had scarcely completed her eighteenth year, when the death of her youngest brother made her at once the object of her father's undivided regard, and of pursuit to many who saw and were smitten with charms in the heiress of Balmeny, which had failed to attract their attention while her brother yet stood between the maiden and that heritage. But the heart they now deemed worth the winning was no longer hers to give. The death of her mother while she was yet a child, had left her her own mistress long before the period when maternal care is most essential; and Edith's love was sought and won by one who had little but youth and a warm heart to recommend him.

Arthur Winton was the orphan son of a small proprietor in the neighbourhood, who, having been deprived of the best part of his property by what he conceived the injustice of King James III., and the rapacity of his favourite Cochrane, was easily induced to join the insurgent nobles who wrought the destruction of that monarch. He was, however, disappointed in his expectations of personal reward, having fallen in the conflict; and his son was too young to vindicate his claim in an age so rude as that of which we write.

Walter Colville, whose family had

been so sadly thinned in the battle we have mentioned, though they had fought on the other side, naturally bore no goodwill to the boy; but his younger son, who was nearly of the same age, viewed him with different feelings. He was much about the house of Balmeny; and, to be brief, he won the affections of the young Edith long before she knew either their nature or their value. Until the departure of young Walter Colville, Arthur's visits were attributed by the old man to his friendship for his son, but when Edith had unhappily become his heiress, he at once attributed them to their proper cause. A stern prohibition of their repetition was the consequence, and the lovers were henceforth reduced to hurried and sorrowful meetings in secret.

On the morning wherein we have chosen to begin the following veritable narrative, the youthful pair had met unobserved, as they imagined, in a shady corner of Balmeny wood, and had begun, the one to lament, and the other to listen, when the sudden apparition of the angry father checked the pleasing current of their imaginings.

He drew his sword as he approached, but the recollection of his seventy years, and his now enfeebled arm, crossing his mind, he replaced the useless weapon, and contented himself with demanding how the youth had dared thus clandestinely to meet his daughter.

Arthur attempted to allay his anger, and to plead his passion as he best could; but the grim and angry frown that sat on Walter Colville's brow, as he listened to him, soon showed how vainly he was speaking, and he ceased in confusion.

"Have you finished, young master?" said Colville, with a sneer. "Then listen: you are not the wooer I look for to Edith. I should prefer him something richer, something wiser, and something truer to the king, than any son of your father is likely ever to prove; so set your heart at rest on that matter. And you giglot, sooth! to your rock and your chisart. But stay; before you go, tell this gallant gay to prowl no longer about my dwelling. By St Bride, an he does, he may chance to meet a fox's fate!"

"Dear father," said the weeping girl, "upbraid us not. Never will I disobey you, never be his, without your own consent."

"Hold there," replied Colville, smiling grimly, "I ask no more." And he led away the maiden, who dared not so much as steal a parting look.

Arthur Winton bore this fiat of the old man, and the dutiful acquiescence of his daughter (though he doubtless thought the latter pushed to the very extreme of filial obedience), if not with equanimity, at least with so much of it as enabled him to leave the presence of his mistress and her father with something like composure. He wandered slowly to the beach, which lay at no great distance, as if he had hoped to inhale with the cool breeze that floated from off the waters, some portion of the calmness in which they then lay bound, his mind occupied in turning over ill-assorted plans for the future, ever broken in upon by some intruding recollection of the past. The place where he now walked was one well calculated, according to the creed of those who believe in the power exercised over the mind by the face of external nature, to instil soothing and tranquillizing feelings. It was a smooth grassy lawn, forming the bottom of a gentle eminence, undulating and stretching downwards to the pebbly beach, among whose round white stones the quiet waters of the Firth fell kissingly. The view was bounded to the north by the rising eminences we have mentioned, and shut in on the west by the woody promontory which is still crowned by Wemyss Castle. To the eastward several rocky eminences stretch into the Firth, the more distant still in-

creasing their seaward march until the bay is closed by the distant point of Kincraig. Before him lay the silver Firth, and, half-veiled in distance, the green fields and hills of Lothian, terminated by the picturesque Law of North Berwick, and the great Bass, frowning like some vast leviathan awakening from his sleep. One or two white-sailed barks lay motionless upon the water. The effect of the whole was so stilling and sedative, that Arthur, half forgetting his recent disappointment, stretched himself upon the sward, and abandoned himself to contemplation.

While he lay thus chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy, the sounds of distant song and merriment occasionally broke upon his ear. He at first regarded them as the mere offspring of imagination, but at length the choral swell of a seemingly joyous ballad, followed by a hearty, far-reverberated shout, convinced him that the merry-making was real, and at no great distance. He started to his feet in some alarm, for his first impression was that the Good Neighbours were holding their revels near him, and he well knew the danger of being detected as a prying overlooker of their mystic merriment. A moment served to dissipate this fear. The voices which he had listened to were too rough and boisterous ever to be mistaken for the singing of those tiny minstrels, whose loudest notes never exceeded in sound the trumpet of the bee. There was no fairy ring round the spot on which he had lain, nor was the hour either the "eye of day" or that of midnight, at which, as is well known, the elfin power was most formidable. After looking and listening for some time, he ascertained that the sounds proceeded from a cave, which we have not yet mentioned, but which forms a striking ornament to the beach, and an object of considerable interest to the geologist, having been doubtless formed long before the Forth had found its present modest limits. Being anxious to dispel the feelings that now preyed on his peace, by a diversion of whatever kind, he walked towards the place. As he approached, the mirth was renewed with increased vehemence, and he perceived, at the western entrance of the cave, a female, from whose swarthy hue and singular habiliments he at once divined the nature of its present inmates. The woman, whose features were stern and somewhat repulsive, wore a long gown, of some coarse dark-coloured material, which fell almost to her feet, having short wide sleeves, which left the arms at perfect liberty, and coming up to the neck, was there fastened with a golden brooch. Her head-dress consisted of a red and yellow coloured shawl, twisted fantastically into a conical shape. Pendants of gold hung from her ears, and rings of the same metal, in many of which were set rubies and other sparkling gems, garnished her tawny fingers. Arthur at once recognised an Egyptian or gipsy in the dark-featured damsel who stood before him, and hesitated a moment whether he should pursue the determination of mixing with the revellers within, to which his eager desire of escaping from his present unhappy feelings had prompted him. The Egyptians were in those days of a much darker character than the remnants of their descendants, which, in spite of press-gangs and justice-warrants, still linger amongst us. Murder among themselves was a thing of everyday occurrence, and desperate robberies, committed upon the king's lieges, by no means rare. The present gang, from their vociferation, seemed in a state of excitement likely to remove any little restraints which the fear of the law's vengeance might at another time have imposed on them, and the features of the woman, contrary to their custom, wore no look of invitation, but rather seemed to deepen into a warning frown the nearer he approached the door at which she was

posted. On the other hand, the honour of the race, to such as trusted them, was proverbial. His curiosity to know more intimately the manners of a people so remarkable as the Egyptians then were, and still are—perhaps a latent wish of being able to extract from their prophetic powers some favourable auspice to his almost expiring hopes—or that nameless something which at times impels us to court the danger we at other times shun with care—all conspired to induce him to enter the cave, and he accordingly attempted to do so. In this, however, he was opposed by the gipsy, who, stepping exactly in his way, waved her arm in a repelling attitude; and, seeing him disinclined to obey this silent injunction, coming still closer to him, whispered, "Get you gone; your life will be endangered if you enter here."

Before Arthur could reply to this injunction, she who gave it was suddenly attacked by a man, who, issuing from the entrance, struck her a smart blow across the shoulders with a staff which he carried, and then, with a scowling look and angry accent, spoke a few words to her in a language which Arthur understood not. She muttered something in reply, and proceeded towards the beach. "The woman is mad at times, young sir," said the man, now addressing Arthur. "Heed her not, I beseech you. We are only a few wandering puir folks, making merry, and if you wish to share our revelry, enter, and welcome. Some of our women may be able to read your weird, should you so incline; you have nothing to fear."

Arthur was by no means satisfied either that the woman was mad, or that the man meant him fairly; but as he could not now retreat without betraying his fear to the dark searching eye which the gipsy bent on him, and was besides conscious that he possessed a well-proved sword, and considerable skill and strength in the handling of it, he signified his wish to join the merry-making, and followed the gipsy into the cave.

On entering he found himself in the interior of a high-roofed cavern, of considerable extent, partly exposed to the seaward side by two arched openings between the lofty recesses of rock which support the roof, that towards the east being the smaller and lower of the two; and the other rising in height nearly to the roof, affording a view of the Firth, and admitting light to the place.

The inhabitants of the cave had ranged themselves along the north and inner side. Nearest the western entrance, stretched on sacks, sheepskins, cloaks, and other nondescript articles of clothing, sat, or rather lay, ten or twelve men, with rather more than double that number of women, all busily engaged in drinking; farther off, some ragged crones were busily superintending the operation of a wood fire on a suspended pot; while, farther off still, a few barebacked asses, and a plentiful variety of worse clad children, were enjoying their common straw.

Arthur was immediately introduced to the company of carousers, some of whom received him with a shout of welcome, but others with evident dissatisfaction; and he overheard, as he seated himself, what seemed an angry expostulation and reply pass between his conductor and one of the party. This individual, who was evidently the chief of the gang, was an aged man, with a beard of silver gray, which, as he sat, descended to his lap, entirely covering his breast. His head was quite bald, with the exception of a few hairs that still struggled for existence behind his ears, and this, added to the snowy whiteness of his eyebrows, and the deep wrinkles in his brow and cheeks, would have conferred an air of reverence on his countenance, had not the sinister expression of his small and

fiery-looking eyes destroyed the charm. On each side of him sat a young girl—the prettiest of the company; and the familiar manner in which they occasionally lolled on the old man's bosom, and fondled with his neck and beard, showed the intimate terms on which they lived with him. The rest of the men were of various ages, and though all of them were marked with that mixed expression of daring recklessness and extreme cunning which has long been "the badge of all their tribe," they attracted (with one exception) little of Arthur's attention. Of the women, the very young ones were extremely pretty, the middle-aged and old ones, more than equally ugly. Young and old, pretty and ill-favoured, all were alike deficient in that retiring modesty of expression without which no face can be accounted truly lovely, and the want of which darkens into hideousness the plainness of homely features. They joined freely in the draughts, which their male companions were making from the horns, which, filled with wine and ale, circulated among the company, and laughed as loud and joked as boldly as they did.

Arthur seated himself in silence, and, somewhat neglectful of the kindness of the female who sat next him, occupied himself in surveying the motley group before him. His eye soon rested on a man seated next the damsel who occupied the place immediately to the left of the chief, and the moment he did he became anxious and interested. The individual was a man of rather more than middle height, of a muscular, though by no means brawny frame. His countenance was ruddy, and of a pleasant mirthful expression; his eyes were full, of a dark hazel colour; his nose, though prominent, gracefully formed, and his mouth small and piquant. His beard was of a dark auburn hue, and he wore moustaches of the same colour. He was dressed in a hodden-gray doublet and hose, which were fastened round his body by a strong leathern girdle, from which hung a broad sword of the two-edged shape. The manner of this individual was evidently different from those of his present companions, and that from the very pains which he took to assimilate it. There was all their mirth without their grossness, and his kind, affable demeanour to the female part of the company differed widely from the blunt and sometimes brutal behaviour of his comrades.

"Who is that on the left of the old man?" whispered Arthur to the man who had introduced him.

"That—that's his favourite dell," replied the man.

"Nay, I mean not the woman—the man upon her left."

"Why, I know not—he's none of us—strayed in like you to share the revelry, I fancy,—though, if he takes not better care of his eyes and hands, an inch or two of cold iron will pay his reckoning. I think he dallies too much with the mort."

The cool, even tone in which this annunciation of probable murder was uttered, rendered the communication more startling to Arthur than if it had been made with a vindictive exclamation or suppressed groan; and he looked anxiously and steadily on the stranger, whose gallant bearing more and more attracted him. The latter had observed him more than once bending his eyes on him, and was not apparently pleased with the strictness of his scrutiny. Twice, when their eyes met, the stranger had checked a rising frown by emptying the horn which he held in his hand; the third time he set it down untasted, and, fixing on Arthur a look of calm commanding dignity, which seemed more native to him than aught around, exclaimed, in a deep and powerful accent,—

"Friend, wherefore peer you so

steadily this way? If you have aught to say, out with it—if not, reserve your ogling for some of the fair eyes near you."

Arthur felt abashed beneath the rebuke which his solicitude for this individual had exposed him to, and he could only mutter in reply something about the young damsel beside him.

"Ah! ah!" replied the stranger, resuming his good humour, "it is to her your looks were sent? Soul of Bruce! but she is well worthy of your wonder. Never—and I have seen many bright eyes—have I lighted on a pair so witching." Then, turning to the object of these praises, he took her hand, and whispered in her ear something, which, though inaudible to those present, was evidently of no unpleasing nature, as her dimpling cheek unquestionably testified.

The patriarch had viewed, for some time, with ill-dissembled anger, the approaches of the stranger to the temporary sovereign of his affections. But whether he thought them becoming too close, or was enraged at the placidity with which they were received, his indignation now burst out, and as is usual in matters of violence, the weight of his vengeance fell heaviest on the weaker individual. He smote the girl violently on the cheek, and, addressing the stranger in a voice hoarse with passion, poured forth a torrent of words which were to Arthur utterly unintelligible.

The stranger, who did not seem to understand the expressions of this address, could not, however, mistake its meaning. The language of passion is universal—and the flashing eye and shrivelled brow of the Egyptian chief were too unequivocal to be misunderstood. He remained silent but a moment, and then, drawing from his bosom a purse, apparently well-filled, he took out a golden Jacobus, and proffered it to the patriarch, as a peace-offering to his awakened anger. The fire of indignation fled from the old man's eyes as they lighted on the gold, but they were instantaneously lighted up by a fiercer and more deadly meaning. Arthur could observe significant looks circulating among the men, who also began to speak to one another in a jargon unintelligible to him. He felt convinced that the purse which the incautious stranger had produced had determined them to destroy him; and, prepossessed with this idea, he saw at once the necessity of the keenest observation, and of the danger which attended his scrutiny being detected. He pretended to begin to feel the influence of the potations in which he had indulged, and apparently occupied himself in toying with the willing dell who sat beside him. He now perceived one or two of the men rise, and proceed to the several openings of the cave, evidently to see that no one approached from without, or perhaps to cut off retreat. He saw, too, that they plied the stranger and himself with wine and ale; and, more convincing than all, he perceived on the darkening brow and gleaming eye of the hoary Egyptian, the awakening excitement of a murderous design. The stranger, in the meantime, apparently unconscious of the peril he was in, began again to bandy kind words and looks with the favourite of the chief. The old man looked grimly on, but did not now seem to wish to interrupt the dalliance. Suddenly he drew his hand from his bosom. It was filled with a dagger, which he raised high, evidently with the intention of slaying the unguarded stranger, who was too much occupied with the eyes and hands of the beauty to perceive his villanous intention.

Arthur, who at the moment was lifting to his mouth the ponderous pewter "stoup," or flagon, containing the ale on which the Egyptians were regaling, saw the wretch's intent, and on the impulse of the moment flung the vessel at

the lifted hand. His aim was fortunately true; the villain's arm fell powerless by his side, while the dagger flew to a considerable distance. Arthur then rose, and crying hastily to the stranger to defend himself, drew his blade and made towards him.

The stranger had perceived the intended blow, though, entangled as he at the moment was, he would unquestionably have fallen a victim to it. He now leaped hastily up, and exclaiming loudly, "*Morte de ma vie!*—Treason!" drew out his sword, and looked for the foe. Arthur now joined him, and, setting their backs to the rocky wall of the cave, they prepared to defend themselves against the enraged gipsies, who, now shouting wildly, drew from under their cloaks long sharp knives, which they brandished furiously in their faces.

The stranger swept his sword around him in a manner that proved him a practised master, and Arthur manfully seconding him, the Egyptians were kept completely at bay, for none seemed daring enough to trust himself within the sweep of the stranger's sword, or that of his new companion. But it was only while they could keep their backs to the rocky wall that they could hope to cope with their savage enemies, who, though they did not come near enough to stab, surrounded them as nearly as they could, and yelled and shouted like so many disappointed fiends. There was apparently no means of escape, though there might be of resistance, as the moment they quitted the wall their backs would have been exposed to the daggers of the infuriated assassins. Arthur perceived, too, to his dismay, that sure means were taken to render their length of sword unavailing. Several women were clambering up the rock behind them carrying large blankets and other cloths, clearly for the purpose of throwing over their swords and themselves, and thus yielding them up a fettered prey to these ruffians. All hope of escape died in his bosom as he discovered the well-laid design, and he was about to rush on the savages, and at least sell his life dearly, when he observed the women who carried the blankets pause and look upwards. He too looked up, and saw, with a consternation that for a moment unmanned him, an immense fragment of loose rock in the very act of being removed from its immemorial resting-place, and precipitated on their heads.

"Holy Virgin! help us, or we are lost!" exclaimed the youth; and the prayer had hardly left his lips ere the threatened engine of their destruction was converted into the means of their immediate escape. The ponderous stone dropped so far directly on its fatal errand, that Arthur instinctively crouched beneath the apparently inevitable blow; but encountering a few feet only above his head a projecting piece of rock, it rebounded from the side of the cave in a slanting direction, and, falling clear of its intended victims, smote to the earth the hoary head of the patriarch. He fell beneath the huge fragment, which hid from their sight the face and neck of the Egyptian; but the convulsive writhings of the unhappy man, which for a moment contorted his frame, only to leave it in utter stillness, told plainly that his long career had ceased, and that the man of blood had become the victim of his own pitiless design.

The Egyptians, panic-struck by this sudden death-blow, set up a loud and stunning wail, as they crowded round the body of their chief; but the stranger and Arthur stayed not to observe their farther demeanour, and, taking advantage of the opening among their enemies, which was now afforded them, sprang out of the cave, and ascended at the top of their speed to the brow of the eminence behind it.

They continued their rapid walk for some time in silence, induced, no doubt, by the tumultuous nature of their feel-

ings, and the violence of their present exertion. At length, having entered a few yards into a wood, which then decorated the place, though soon after to be converted into keel and timbers for the "Great Michael," the stranger halted, and, taking Arthur by the hand, said breathlessly,—

"By Saint Andrew, young sir, you have done us this day good service. I never thought to have been so indebted to a pint-stoup, trow me."

"But what sorrow tempted you, man," replied Arthur, rather crossly, "to play the fool with the old villain's dearie in yon wild sort of fashion; and, above all, what induced you to flourish your well-filled purse in the eyes of those who love gold better than anything else save blood?"

"Whim—chance—*fate*—I thought at one time. It is long since cunning men have told me that I shall die for a woman, and, by the Bruce's soul! I thought the hour had come. As for my Jacobuses, I rejoice I saved them from the filching crew, as they will serve for an earnest—a poor one, to be sure—of my thankfulness to my brave deliverer;" and so saying, he drew from his bosom the purse which had excited the fatal cupidity of the Egyptians, and gracefully proffered it to the youth.

Arthur had all along suspected—nay, felt assured—that his companion was of a rank superior to his appearance; and, had it not been so, his present conduct would have convinced him.

"Whoever you are, sir," said he, "that in this lowly guise speak the language and the sentiments of a noble-born, your own heart will, I know, convince you that I dare not accept your gold. The service I rendered you I would have rendered to the poorest carle in Fife, but were it ten times greater than it was, it must not be repaid with coin."

"All are not carles who wear hodden gray and blue bonnets with you, I find," replied the stranger, smiling approvingly. But come, if gold cannot repay the service you have done me, tell me what can."

"Nothing in your power to perform," replied Arthur, calmly.

"Try," continued the stranger; "I bear with me a talisman which can command all objects which men in general desire. Choose, then—wealth, worship, or a fair wife!"

There was something so frank, open, yet condescending, in the tone and appearance of this extraordinary stranger, that Arthur could not resist their fascinating influence, and although he could not imagine that any interference on the part of his new friend would produce the slightest change in the stern sentence of Walter Colville, he communicated to him a general outline of his present situation.

The stranger listened attentively to the detail—then demanded how far distant the dwelling of Colville was; and, on being informed of its near vicinity to the spot on which they then stood, declared his intention of immediately proceeding thither and using his influence in Arthur's behalf.

The latter opposed this resolution but faintly; for, though he was, as we have said, utterly at a loss to conceive how his cause was to be benefited by the proffered kindness of the stranger, yet a vague and almost latent hope of still obtaining Edith never entirely forsook him.

He conducted the stranger through the wood, therefore, by the path which led most directly to the house of Balmeny. On reaching the skirt of the forest, it was agreed that the former should proceed alone to the dwelling of Colville, and that Arthur should remain where he was, and await the result.

CHAPTER II.

THE stranger set out on his voluntary mission at a rapid pace, and soon arrived at the house. The door stood open, and he entered with the careless sauntering air of one entirely indifferent as to the welcome he might be greeted with. He found Colville seated apparently in no very pleasant humour, and his daughter, bustling about among the servant-maidens, wearing on her flushed cheek and suffused eye undoubted symptoms of the sorrow with which the morning's adventure had afflicted her.

"Give you good-e'en gudeman of Balmeny," said the stranger, seating himself, without waiting an invitation, on the bench opposite Colville.

"The same to you, neebour," said the landlord, in a tone that had little of welcome in it.

A few moments' silence now ensued, Colville evidently waiting with some impatience for the tidings which the other seemed in no haste to communicate to him. But this could not last.

"Have you anything to tell, ask, or deliver, friend?" at last said Colville.

"This bright-e'ed maiden is the bonny lass of Balmeny, I'm thinking," was the unreplying answer.

"That is my daughter, truly," said the landlord, becoming more and more impatient; "does your coming concern her?"

"That it does," replied the stranger. "There's an auld byeword, that 'foul fish and fair daughters are nae keeping ware.' This fair May is the object of my visit; in short, gudeman, I come awooing."

At the sound of this magnetic word, a universal commotion arose in the dwelling of Colville. The maiden, who was its object, surveyed the stranger with indignation and surprise; the servants whispered and tittered among each other; and Colville seemed for a moment about to give vent to the feelings of his anger, when the current of his feelings suddenly changed, and, directing a look of malicious joy to his daughter, he addressed the stranger—

"Welcome, wooer—welcome. Come, lasses, set meat and drink before this gentle here; as the auld Earl of Douglas said, 'It's ill arguing between a fu' man and a fasting.'"

The order was obeyed with great readiness by the serving maidens, who set before the stranger the household bread and cheese, and a bicker of no scanty dimensions, containing the reaming ale for which Scotland has been so long famous. There was a malicious merriment twinkling from every eye as the scene went on; for all knew well that the over-strained kindness of the host was soon to be converted into outrageous and overwhelming abuse of the guest. The stranger, however, seemed either not to notice or to slight these indications. He partook heartily of the good cheer set before him, and amused himself by returning with good-humoured smiles the stolen looks of the simpering maidens. He looked in vain, however, for Edith, who had retired from the place.

"And now," said Colville, who began to think the stranger somewhat more at ease than he could have wished, "Your name, wooer?"

"My name?" said the stranger, somewhat embarrassed.

"Ay, your name—all men have a name. *Knaves* [laying an emphasis on the word] many."

"True, gudeman, true. My name, then, is Stuart—James Stuart. I hope it pleases you?"

"The name is the best in the land," said the old man, touching his bonnet. As to the wearer—hem!—'a Stuarts

are no sib to the king', ye ken. What countryman are you?"

"I was born at Stirling," said the stranger.

"Ay, ay, it may be, it may be," replied Walter Colville; "but, to bring the matter to a point, what lands and living hae ye, friend?"

"Sometimes less, sometimes more," replied the stranger, "as I happen to be in the giving or the taking humour. At the lowest ebb, however, I think they are at least worth all that ever called a Colville master."

"Faith, and that's a bauld word, neebour," cried Colville, bitterly—"and one that, I'm jalousing, you'll find it difficult to make gude."

"At your own time it shall be proved, gudeman; but it is not for myself I come to woo the bonny lass of Balmeny. I am, thanks to a wise old man who sits in Windsor, wived already."

"And who, in Beelzebub's name, may you be blackfit for?" demanded Colville, rising in wrath.

"Give your daughter to the youth I shall name, and I will, on her wedding-day, fill you up one lippie with the red gold, and five running o'er with silver."

"Give her! To whom?"

"To one who loves her dearly; and, what is more, is dearly loved in return, old man."

"Who is he?" reiterated Colville.

"One who is worthy already of the hand of the best ae daughter of any laird in Fife; and who, ere to-morrow's sun sets, will be wealthier than yourself."

"Who—who—who is he?" cried the old man, stamping in a paroxysm of rage.

"Arthur Winton!" said the stranger.

The anger of Colville, when this unpleasing name was uttered, almost overwhelmed him.

"Out of my doors, you rascally impostor," at length he was able to exclaim; "out of my doors! Swith away to the minion who sent you here, an you would wish not to taste the discipline of the whip, or to escape being worried by the tykes."

To the stranger, the anger of the old man, instead of fear, seemed only to occasion merriment. He laughed so heartily at the violence into which the rage of his host seduced him, that the tears actually stood in his eyes—conduct that naturally increased the passion which it fed on. The servants stood looking on in silent wonder; and Edith, startled by the noise of the discordant sounds, returned to the place in wonder and alarm.

An unexpected termination was suddenly put to the scene by the entrance of Arthur Winton. His cheek was flushed with haste; and he was so breathless that he could hardly exclaim,—

"Save yourself, sir stranger, by instant flight; the Egyptians have tracked our path hither, and are pursuing us here with numbers ten times exceeding those we encountered in the cave."

"Let them come," said the stranger, with a smile; "Egyptians though they be, they cannot eat through stone walls or oaken doors. We will carouse within while they howl without, and drink the *dirige* of their chief."

Arthur said nothing, but looked doubtingly at Colville.

"And do you really imagine, worthy youth, and no less worthy blackfit, that I am to have my house sieged, my cattle stolen, and my corn carried off, to shield you from the consequences of your drunken brawls? Not I, by the cat of the blessed Bride. Out of my doors, ye caitiffs,—they can but slay you, and the whittle has crossed the craig of mony a better fellow than any of ye twasome is likely to prove. Begone, I say."

"Nay, my dear father," said Edith, imploringly, "do not drive them forth now; the Egyptians are approaching the house—they cannot escape."

"And they shall not stay here," re-

plied the old man, harshly, the tone of agony in which Edith's entreaties were uttered recalling all the bitterness of his feelings against Arthur.

"At least, Walter Colville," said Arthur, "save this stranger. He cannot have offended you. It was on my errand he came hither. I will go forth alone. Perhaps one victim may suffice."

"Nay, brave youth," said the stranger, "we go together. Farewell, old man. You are a Scot, and yet have betrayed your guest. You are a Colville, and the first of the line that ever turned his back upon a Stuart at his utmost need."

The tone and sentiment of these words had a powerful effect on Walter Colville. A momentary confusion rested on his countenance, and then, with a smile ill put on, he said,—

"Come, come, sirs; I but joked wi' ye. Did you really think that Walter Colville would abandon to his enemy any who have bitten his bannock, and kissed his cup as you have done? Na, na; here you are safe while the auld wa's stand. Sit down. I'll go above and look out for the landloupers."

The old man left the place accordingly, and Arthur, seizing the opportunity, retired to one corner with Edith, where the nature of their conversation could be only guessed from the animated looks and gestures of the affectionate pair.

The stranger in the meantime strode up and down the place, regardless of the affrighted servants, singing to himself—

> "O whaur will I get a bonny boy,
> That will win hose and shoon;
> That will rin to Lord Barnard's yett,
> And bid his ladye come?"

"What say you, my little man?" he continued, addressing a boy of twelve or thirteen years, who sat before the fire, sharing, with a shaggy collie, the contents of an ample cog, altogether unheeding the agitation which reigned around him; "will you run to Wemyss Castle with a message to Sir David?"

"I' the noo!" said the boy, looking up with an air expressive of the sense of the unparalleled oppression proposed in interrupting him during the sacred ceremony of supper.

The stranger laughed, and drawing from his bosom the purse we have so often spoken of, he displayed a Jacobus, and offered it to the boy. "Na, I'll no gang for the yellow bawbee," said the urchin; "but if ye'll gie me the braw whittle, I'll rin." The stranger immediately put into his hand the dagger he coveted, and drawing him aside, conveyed to him in whispers the message he was to deliver.

Walter Colville now re-entered, and informed them that he had reconnoitred the Egyptians, who, including women and children, seemed to amount to above a hundred.

"Could I but get this younker beyond their clutches," said the stranger, "a short half hour would disperse them like the leaves in autumn."

Colville stared at this avowal, but was silent. The conviction of Arthur, that the speaker was not what he seemed, now seized on his mind also, but it appeared to inspire him with no pleasant feeling; on the contrary, anxiety deepened on his countenance the more and more he gazed on the handsome features of his guest, and the wild shouts of the Egyptians, which he had previously heard with comparative indifference, now evidently inspired him with the deepest terror.

It was agreed at length that the boy should make the attempt. To get him out of the house, without endangering the inmates, was comparatively easy, as the Egyptians as yet stood at some distance from the door. Once out, they had only his own ready wit and speed of foot to trust to. While Colville

and Arthur therefore undid with due caution the massive bars and bolts which protected the oaken door, the stranger, anxious to witness the success of his messenger, ascended to the upper storey, and stood at the open casement. He was immediately observed by the Egyptians, who set up a yell of savage impatience at the sight, the men brandishing their weapons, and the women waving their arms, as if threatening vengeance against him.

Their attention was now, however, directed from him to the youthful messenger, who approached towards them undauntedly. They went forward to meet him.

"The master sent me to see what ye're a' here for," said the boy.

"Tell him," said one of the Egyptians harshly, "we are come to demand the two strangers who have just entered his dwelling. Let him give them to our vengeance, and we will depart peaceably—not a feather or a rag of his shall be scathed by us."

"And what if he shouldna just agree to this?" said the boy, edging towards the west, covering the manœuvre, as if retiring towards the house.

"If he refuse us, woe unto him. We will leave him neither corn nor cattle, kith nor kin; burn his house with fire, and his own red blood shall lapper on his cold hearth-stone."

"Haith, carle, you maun tell him that yoursel," said the boy, as with one wild bound he sprung from the group, and, with the speed of a grayhound, made for the wood.

There was a cry of disappointment burst forth from the Egyptians as they perceived his intention, and many set out in pursuit. The chase was viewed with deep interest by the inmates of the house—for Colville, Edith, and Arthur Winton had now joined the stranger. The wood was not far distant; the boy was famous for his swiftness of foot; and they could see that his pursuers were falling fast behind. To their dismay, however, they perceived at length that there was a powerful dog among the number, who continued the chase after all his human competitors had abandoned it in despair. He gained fast upon the boy. "He is lost!" said Edith, piteously; "that villanous dog will tear him to pieces." But the event belied the maiden's fear. Just as the ferocious animal seemed about to seize him, the boy was seen to turn upon his pursuer. The dog gave a loud howl, and fell to the ground, and the stranger could perceive his own dagger gleaming in the stripling's hand, as he waved it in triumph o'er his head ere he disappeared among the trees.

"I could stake an earldom," said the stranger exultingly, "on that boy's proving a noble soldier! By the soul of Bruce, he can both fight and flee."

Colville's terror, as he listened to these words, fairly mastered the composure which he had hitherto affected. He took off his bonnet, and bending lowly to the stranger, said in a tremulous voice—

"In Heaven's name, say, oh! say, sir, you are not the king!"

"Even so, good Walter, James of Scotland stands before you. Are you sorry to see me? By Saint Andrew, I had hoped I should be welcome to every honest house,—ay, and every honest heart, in my dominions."

Walter had dropped on his knee as the truth, which he had for some time suspected, was confirmed to him, and, looking up to his royal guest, while tears stood in his eyes—"Welcome, my noble prince; what is it of Walter Colville's, from the bodle in his purse to the last drop of his heart's blood, that the king's not welcome to? I and mine, my liege, have fought, and bled, and died for the royal house. But to see your grace here in peril, surrounded by so many villains, and this old arm alone left to assist you! Oh! for the

six braw fellows that I have seen prancing on yonder lea,—they would have cleared a way for your highness through them all!"

"Never fear for me, Walter Colville; I am not doomed to fall by a brawl of this kind, or in mine own land;—so runs the rede."

The king now turned round, and perceived Arthur and Edith, who had retired to a little distance. When they saw they were observed, they advanced and would have kneeled; but the prince prevented this. He took them both by the hand, and imprinted on the lips of Edith a kiss, savouring as much of warm affection as of kingly courtesy.

Their attention was now directed to the operations of the Egyptians. They perceived, with some surprise, that a considerable number of them left the rest, and made for the wood, and that those who remained ceased the yelling manifestations of sorrow and revenge which had so affrighted Edith.

"They are meditating a retreat, methinks," said the king.

"I fear, my liege," said Colville, "they are rather planning some mode of successful assault;" and the return of the Egyptians too soon verified the apprehension. They bore with them the trunk of a fallen tree, and the besieged at once saw the use for which this powerful engine was intended.

"My door can never withstand the shock of a ram like this," cried Walter; "they will force a passage, and out and alas! your highness will be murdered—murdered in the house of Balmeny!"

James was proverbially brave, but it cannot be denied that he looked a little grave as he perceived the ponderous engine borne along, which in all probability would, in a few minutes, lay open the passage to a band of miscreants thirsting for his blood, and against whose rage the bravery of himself and his friends seemed a poor defence.

"Let the worst come to the worst," said he at length, "we three will make good this staircase for a stricken hour at least; before then the rescue must arrive."

The king, Colville, and Arthur now sought the floor below; Edith, with the serving-maidens, being stationed above, to be, in case of the Egyptians forcing an entry, still within the defence of the stair.

The door was of massive oak, studded with iron nails, and supported by three iron bolts of considerable thickness. An additional defence was now added in the shape of planks placed diagonally under these bolts, and for a few moments the besieged imagined it might withstand the efforts of the assailants. But a few strokes of the tree soon showed the fallacy of this hope. The door shook under the first blow, and ere a score had been given, the yielding hinges showed that the Egyptians had well calculated the force of their instrument.

"It must be cold steel that saves us after all," said the king, retreating to the staircase.

"Oh, that I and all my kin were stark dead on this floor, and your highness safe on Falkland green!" exclaimed Colville, wringing his wrinkled hands, and following.

They had scarcely gained their intended position at the upper landing of the staircase, when, yielding to a desperate stroke, the door flew open, and the infuriated Egyptians, shouting, made their way to the interior. Not finding those they sought below, they next proceeded to ascend the stair. This, however, was an ascent fatal to all who attempted it. Corpse after corpse fell backward among the enraged ruffians under the blows of the king and Arthur, until no one could be found daring enough to attempt the passage.

"Let us smeek them in their hive," at length cried a hoarse voice, "and so let them either roast or come forth."

A shout of approbation followed this

advice, and, while a chosen few remained to guard the stair, the remainder roamed about the house collecting together everything which could assist their diabolical design.

The king's heart, and that of his brave companions, sunk as they heard this resistless plan of destruction proposed and set about. It was for a moment only, however, for suddenly they heard the clear sweet voice of Edith exclaiming, "We are saved, we are saved! yonder comes the Lord of Wemyss and his gallant followers!" and immediately after the maiden herself appeared to reiterate the tidings.

"Are you sure of what you say, Edith?" asked the king eagerly. "How do the horsemen ride?"

"As if their coursers were winged," replied Edith, "all of them; but one who backs a gray steed of surpassing power, is far before the rest, and ever and anon turns round, as if upbraidingly, to his followers."

"My trusty David!" exclaimed the king, with emotion, "well wert thou worthy of the gallant gray!"

There was now heard a peculiar shout from among the Egyptians without, which was rightly interpreted as a signal of retreat; for it was immediately followed by the evacuation of the house; and so speedy and simultaneous was their flight, that the king could only perceive the latest of the tribe as they made for the wood, leaving to Wemyss and his companions a deserted field and an open entrance.

Thanks, David, for this timely rescue," said the king, as the knight bended the knee before him. "By my crown, the spurs were well bestowed on one who can so fairly use them!"

James, followed by Sir David, Walter, Arthur, and the rest, now led the way to the upper chamber, where the immoderate joy and hospitality of the old man displayed itself in the most substantial form. When they had caroused for some time, the king, turning to Colville, said,—

"Mine host, did I hear rightly when you said there was nothing beneath this roof-tree to which I was not welcome?"

"Your highness heard rightly."

"Give me then this fair maiden. We kings, you know, seldom choose the least valuable of our subjects' chattels."

"Your grace may command me," said Colville, though somewhat hesitatingly, for he saw the turn which things were taking.

"And you too, sweet Edith?" said the king, again saluting the blushing girl; and then, without waiting for an answer, continued, "that you may all know, my lieges, that we accept your benevolences merely for your own benefits, I give away this treasure, tempting as it is, to one who has well deserved the favour at our hand. Take her, Arthur, and confess that I have found a way to repay the debt I owed you. Receive his hand, fair maiden, and if it will add anything to its value in your eyes, know that it has this day saved a king's life."

The old man's sentiments in regard to Arthur Winton had been undergoing a change imperceptible even to himself, from the moment he had perceived him the companion and probable favourite of the king; but the revolution was completed when he was made acquainted with the particulars of his interference in the royal behalf,—a merit which in his eyes would have outweighed a thousand faults in his intended son-in-law.

King James shortly afterwards left the house of Balmeny amid the blessings of its inmates; and to close our tale, we have only to add, that the gift of the monarch was shortly after confirmed at the altar, where Edith became the happy bride of Arthur Winton; and that the royal gratitude flowed freely on the wedded pair, as any who chooses to pursue the time-worn records of the Great Seal may satisfy himself.

HELEN WATERS:

A TRADITIONARY TALE OF THE ORKNEYS.

By John Malcolm.

> The lost, the castaway on desert isles,
> Or rocks of ocean, where no human aid
> Can reach them more.

The mountains of Hoy, the highest of the Orkney Islands, rise abruptly out of the ocean to an elevation of fifteen hundred feet, and terminate on one side in a cliff, sheer and stupendous, as if the mountain had been cut down through the middle, and the severed portion of it buried in the sea. Immediately on the landward side of this precipice lies a soft green valley, embosomed among huge black cliffs, where the sound of the human voice, or the report of a gun, is reverberated among the rocks, where it gradually dies away into faint and fainter echoes.

The hills are intersected by deep and dreary glens, where the hum of the world is never heard, and the only voices of life are the bleat of the lamb and the shriek of the eagle;—even the sounds of inanimate nature are of the most doleful kind. The breeze wafts not on its wings the whisper of the woodland; for there are no trees in the island, and the roar of the torrent-stream and the sea's eternal moan for ever sadden these solitudes of the world.

The ascent of the mountains is in some parts almost perpendicular, and in all exceedingly steep; but the admirer of nature in her grandest and most striking aspects will be amply compensated for his toil, upon reaching their summits, by the magnificent prospect which they afford. Towards the north and east, the vast expanse of ocean, and the islands, with their dark heath-clad hills, their green vales, and gigantic cliffs, expand below as far as the eye can reach. The view towards the south is bounded by the lofty mountains of Scarabin and Morven, and by the wild hills of Strathnaver and Cape Wrath, stretching towards the west. In the direction of the latter, and far away in mid-ocean, may be seen, during clear weather, a barren rock, called Sule Skerry, which superstition in former days had peopled with mermaids and monsters of the deep. This solitary spot had been long known to the Orcadians as the haunt of seafowl and seals, and was the scene of their frequent shooting excursions, though such perilous adventures have been long since abandoned. It is associated in my mind with a wild tale, which I have heard in my youth, though I am uncertain whether or not the circumstances which it narrates are yet in the memory of living men.

On the opposite side of the mountainous island of which I speak, and divided from it by a frith of several miles in breadth, lie the flat serpentine shores of the principal island or mainland, where, upon a gentle slope, at a short distance from the sea-beach, may still be traced the site of a cottage, once the dwelling of a humble couple of the name of Waters, belonging to that class of small proprietors which forms the connecting link betwixt the gentry and the peasantry.

Their only child Helen, at the time to which my narrative refers, was just budding into womanhood; and though uninitiated into what would now be considered the indispensable requisites of female education, was yet not alto-

gether unaccomplished for the simple times in which she lived; and, though a child of nature, had a grace beyond the reach of art, untaught and unteachable. There was a softness and delicacy in her whole demeanour, never looked for and seldom found in the humble sphere of life to which she belonged. Yet her beauty did not startle or surprise, but stole over the heart almost insensibly, like the gentle fall of the summer evenings of her own native isles, and, like that, produced in the beholder an emotion almost allied to sadness.

Such a being was not likely to be appreciated by the rude and commonplace minds by whom she was surrounded, and with whom a rosy cheek and a laughing eye constitute the *beau-ideal* of woman; but she awakened a world of romance in one young heart, with which her own gentle bosom shared the feelings she inspired.

Henry Graham, the lover of Helen Waters, was the son of a small proprietor in the neighbourhood; and being of the same humble rank with herself, and, though not rich, removed from poverty, their views were undisturbed by the dotage of avarice or the fears of want, and the smiles of approving friends seemed to await their approaching union.

The days of courtship were drawing towards a close, and the period of their marriage was at last condescended upon by the bride. Among the middling and lower classes of society in the Orkneys, it is customary for the bridegroom to invite the wedding-guests in person; for which purpose, a few days previous to the marriage, young Graham, accompanied by his friend, took a boat and proceeded to the island of Hoy, to request the attendance of a family residing there; which done, on the following day they joined a party of young men upon a shooting excursion to Rackwick, a village romantically situated on the opposite side of the island. They left the house of their friends on a bright, calm, autumnal morning, and began to traverse the wild and savage glens which intersect the hills, where their progress might be guessed at by the reports of their guns, which gradually became faint and fainter among the mountains, and at last died away altogether in the distance.

That night and the following day passed, and they did not return to the house of their friends; but the weather being extremely fine, it was supposed they had extended their excursion to the opposite coast of Caithness, or to some of the neighbouring islands, so that their absence created no alarm whatever.

The same conjectures also quieted the anxieties of the bride, until the morning previous to that of the marriage, when her alarm could no longer be suppressed. A boat was manned in all haste, and dispatched to Hoy in quest of them, but did not return during that day nor the succeeding night.

The morning of the wedding-day dawned at last, bright and beautiful, but still no intelligence arrived of the bridegroom and his party; and the hope which lingered to the last, that they would still make their appearance in time, had prevented the invitations from being postponed, so that the marriage party began to assemble about mid-day.

While the friends were all in amazement, and the bride in a most pitiable state, a boat was seen crossing from Hoy, and hope once more began to revive; but, upon landing her passengers, they turned out to be the members of the family invited from that island, whose surprise at finding how matters stood was equal to that of the other friends.

Meantime all parties united in their endeavours to cheer the poor bride; for which purpose it was agreed that the

company should remain, and that the festivities should go on,—an arrangement to which the guests the more willingly consented, from a lingering hope that the absentees would still make their appearance, and partly with a view to divert in some measure the intense and painful attention of the bride from the untoward circumstance; while she, on the other hand, from feelings of hospitality, exerted herself, though with a heavy heart, to make her guests as comfortable as possible; and, by the very endeavour to put on an appearance of tranquillity, acquired so much of the reality as to prevent her from sinking altogether under the weight of her fears.

Meantime the day advanced, the festivities went on, and the glass began to circulate so freely, that the absence of the principal actor of the scene was so far forgotten, that at length the music struck up, and dancing commenced with all the animation which that exercise inspires among the natives of Scotland.

Things were going on in this way, when, towards night, and during one of the pauses of the dance, a loud rap was heard at the door, and a gleam of hope was seen to lighten every face, when there entered, not the bridegroom and his party, but a wandering lunatic, named Annie Fae, well known and not a little feared in all that country-side. Her garments were little else than a collection of fantastic and party-coloured rags, bound close around her waist with a girdle of straw, and her head had no other covering than the dark tangled locks that hung, snake-like, over her wild and weather-beaten face, from which peered forth her small, deep-sunk eyes, gleaming with the baleful light of insanity.

Before the surprise and dismay excited by her sudden and unwelcome appearance had subsided, she addressed the company in the following wild and incoherent manner:—

"Hech, sirs, but here's a merry meeting indeed,—a fine company, by my faith; plenty o' gude meat and drink here, and nae expense spared! Aweel, it's no a' lost neither; this blithe bridal will mak a braw burial, and the same feast will do for baith. But what's the folk a' glowering at? I'se warrant now ye're cursing Annie Fae for spoiling your sport. But ye ken I maun just say my say, and that being done, I'll no detain you langer, but jog on my journey; only I wad just hint, that, for decency's sake, ye suld stop that fine fiddling and dancing; for ye may weel believe that thae kind o' things gie nae great pleasure to the dead!"

Having thus delivered herself, she made a low curtsey, and brushed out of the house, leaving the company in that state of painful excitement which, in such circumstances, even the ravings of a poor deranged wanderer could not fail to produce.

In this state we, too, will leave them for the present, and proceed with the party who set off on the preceding day in search of the bridegroom and his friends. The latter were traced to Rackwick; but there no intelligence could be gained, except that, some days previous, a boat, having on board several sportsmen, had been seen putting off from the shore, and sailing away in the direction of Sule Skerry.

The weather continuing fine, the searching party hired a large boat, and proceeded to that remote and solitary rock, upon which, as they neared it, they could discover nothing, except swarms of seals, which immediately began to flounder towards the water-edge. Upon landing, a large flock of sea-fowl arose from the centre of the rock with a deafening scream; and upon approaching the spot, they beheld, with dumb amazement and horror, the dead bodies of the party of whom they had come in search, but so mangled and

disfigured by the seals and sea-fowl, that they could barely be recognised.

It appeared that these unfortunates, upon landing, had forgot their guns in the boat, which had slipt from her fastenings, and left them upon the rock, where they had at last perished of cold and hunger.

Fancy can but feebly conceive, and still less can words describe, the feelings with which the lost men must have beheld their bark drifting away over the face of the waters, and found themselves abandoned in the vast solitude of the ocean. Their sensations must have resembled his who wakens in the grave from a death-like trance, to find himself buried alive!

With what agony must they have gazed upon the distant sails, gliding away over the deep, but keeping far aloof from the rock of desolation, and have heard the shrieks which they sent over the flood, in the vain hope of their reaching some distant ship, mocked by the doleful scream of the sea-fowl! How must their horrors have been aggravated by the far-off view of their native hills, lifting their lonely peaks above the wave, and awakening the dreadful consciousness that they were still within the grasp of humanity, yet no arm stretched forth to save them; while the sun was riding high in the heavens, and the sea basking in his beams below, and nature looking with reckless smiles upon their dying agonies!

As soon as the stupor of horror and amazement had subsided, the party placed the dead bodies in their boat, and, crowding all sail, stood for the Orkneys. They landed at night upon the beach, immediately below the house where the wedding guests were assembled; and there, while they were debating in what manner to proceed, were overheard by the insane wanderer, the result of whose visit has already been described.

She had scarcely left the house, when a low sound of voices was heard approaching. An exclamation of joy broke from the bride. She rushed out of the house with outstretched arms to embrace her lover, and the next moment, with a fearful shriek, fell upon his corpse! With that shriek reason and memory passed away for ever. She was carried to bed delirious, and died towards morning. The bridal was changed into a burial, and Helen Waters and her lover slept in the same grave!

LEGEND OF THE LARGE MOUTH.

BY ROBERT CHAMBERS, LL.D.

"Here's a large mouth indeed!"
SHAKSPEARE—*King John.*

ARRIVING one evening at an inn in Glasgow, I was shown into a room which already contained a promiscuous assemblage of travellers. Amongst these gentlemen—*commercial* gentlemen chiefly—there was one whose features struck me as being the most ill-favoured I had ever beheld. He was a large, pursy old man, with a forehead "villanous low," hair like bell-ropes, eyes the smallest and most porkish of all possible eyes, and a nose which showed no more prominence in a side-view than that of the moon, as exhibited in her

first quarter upon a freemason's apron. All these monstrosities were, however, as beauties, as absolute perfections, compared with the mouth—the enormous mouth, which, grinning beneath, formed a sort of rustic basement to the whole superstructure of his facial horrors. This mouth—if mouth it could be called, which bore so little resemblance to the mouths of mankind in general—turned full upon me as I entered, and happening at the moment to be employed in a yawn, actually seemed as if it would have willingly received me into its prodigious crater, and consigned me to the fate of Empedocles, without so much as a shoe being left to tell the tale.

The company of a traveller's room is generally very stiff, every man sitting by his own table in his own corner, with his back turned upon the rest. It was not so, however, on the present occasion. The most of the present company seemed to have been so long together in the hotel as to have become very gracious with each other; while any recent comers, finding themselves plumped into a society already thawed and commingled, had naturally entered into the spirit of the rest. Soon discovering how matters stood, I joined in the conversation, and speedily found that the man with the large mouth was one of the most polite and agreeable of mankind. He was one of those old, experienced gentlemen of the road, who know everything that is necessary to be known, and are never at a loss about anything. His jokes, his anecdotes, his remarks, were all excellent, and kept the rest bound, as it were, in a chain. The best of him was, that he seemed quite at ease on the subject of his mouth.

No doubt he was conscious of his preternatural ugliness—for whatever may be said about the blinding effect of self-love, and so forth, I hold that the most of people know pretty nearly how they stand as to personal attractions; but he had none of that boggling, unsteady, uncomplacent deportment, so remarkable in the generality of ill-looking people. On the contrary, there was an air of perfect self-satisfaction about him, which told that he either was so familiar with the dreadful fact as to mind it not, or that he was a thorough man of the world, above considering so trivial a particular, or that he was rich, and could afford to be detested. It was curious, however, that even while he almost convulsed the rest with his jokes, he never laughed in the least himself. He evidently dared not; the guffaw of such a man must have produced consequences not to be calmly contemplated. Part, indeed, of the humorous effect of his conversation arose from the cautious way in which he managed his mouth. A small aperture at one side, bearing the same proportion to the whole that the wicket of a carriage-gate does to the whole gate itself, served for the emission of his words. Anything else would have been a mere waste of lip.

On my ordering refreshment, I was informed by the company, that in consideration of this being the anniversary of a distinguished historical event, they had agreed to sup together in a rather more formal way than usual, and that they would be happy if I would join them. Having assented to the proposal, I began to reflect with some anxiety upon the probable conduct of the Mouth at table. How so extraordinary a feature would behave, what it would ask for, after what manner it would masticate, and, above all, how much it would devour, were to me subjects of the most interesting speculation. The wicket won't do there (thought I to myself), or I'm much mistaken. Yet again,—so ran my thoughts,—many large men have been known to eat very little, while your true devourers are found to be lean, shrivelled creatures, who do not seem to be ever the better

of it. "A large mouth," says the Scottish proverb, "has always a good luck for its meat." That may be, thought I, and yet the large mouth may be quite indifferent to what it is so sure of getting. All kinds of ideas connected with this subject ran through my mind; but in the end I found it all a riddle. The Mouth might prove either gluttonous or abstemious, without exciting more surprise by the one event than by the other.

By-and-by some one asked a waiter if supper was nearly ready, and on an answer in the affirmative being given, I observed the Mouth suddenly bustle up, and assume an air of eager promptitude that almost seemed to decide the question. The man rose, and, going to a corner of the room where his great-coat was hanging, brought forth a small package, which he proceeded to untie at a side-table. The only article it contained was a spoon, which he immediately brought forward and laid upon the table, accompanying the action with an air that might have befitted a surgeon in arranging his instruments for an operation. I had no longer any doubt as to the gastronomical character of the Mouth, for here was an article that might have served in the nursery of Glumdalclitch. It was an antique silver implement, with a short handle, and a rim about four inches in diameter, like an ordinary saucer. Observing the curiosity of the company to be strongly excited, the old man showed it round with good-natured politeness, telling us that he had been so long accustomed at home to the use of this goodly article, that he could now hardly discuss either soup or dessert without it, and therefore made a point of carrying it along with him in his travels.

"But, indeed, gentlemen," said he, "why should I make this a matter of delicacy with you? The truth is, the spoon has a history, and my mouth—none of the least, you see—has also a history. If you feel any curiosity upon these points, I will give you a biographical account of the one, and an autobiographical account of the other, to amuse you till supper is ready."

To this frank proposal we all cordially agreed, and the old man, sitting down with the spoon in his hand, commenced a narrative which I shall here give in the third person.

His mouth was the chieftain and representative of a long ancestral line of illustrious and most extensive mouths, which had flourished for centuries at a place called Tullibody. According to tradition, the mouth came into the family by marriage. An ancestor of the speaker wooed, and was about to wed, a lady of great personal attractions, but no fortune, when his father interfered, and induced him, by the threat of disinheritation on the one hand, and the temptation of great wealth on the other, to marry another dame, the heiress of a large fortune and large mouth, both bequeathed to her by her grandfather, one of the celebrated "kail-suppers of Fife." When his resolution was communicated to the tocherless lady, she was naturally very much enraged, and wished that the mouth of her rival might descend, in all its latitude, to the latest generation of her faithless swain's posterity; after which she took her bed—and married another lover, her *second-best*, next week, by way of revenge.

The country people, who pay great attention to the sayings of ladies condemned to wear the willow, waited anxiously for the fulfilment of her malediction, and accordingly shook their heads and had their own thoughts, when the kail-supper's descendant brought forth a son whose mouth, even in his swaddling-clothes, reflected back credit on her own. The triumph of the ill-wisher was considered complete, when the second, the third, and all the other children, were found to be distinguished

by this feature; and what gave the triumph still more poignancy was, that the daughters were found to be no more exempted than the sons from the family doom. In the second generation, moreover, instead of being softened or diluted away, the mouth rather increased, and so it had done in every successive generation since that time. The race having been very prolific, it was now spread so much that there was scarcely a face in Tullibody or the neighbourhood altogether free of the contagion; so that the person addressing us, who had his permanent residence there, could look round him upon several hundreds of kindred mouths, with all the patriarchal feelings of the chief of a large Highland clan.

If there had been any disposition in the family to treat their fate ill-humouredly, it would have been neutralised by the luck which evidently accompanied the introduction and transmission of this singular feature. So far, however, from entertaining any grudge or regret upon the subject, it had been the habit of the family to treat it as a capital joke, and to be always the first to laugh at it themselves. So much was this the case, that a wealthy representative of the family, about a century ago, founded, not an hospital or a school, but a *spoon*, which should be handed down from mouth to mouth as a practical and traditionary jest upon the family feature, and, though not entailed, be regarded, he hoped, as a thing never to be parted with for any consideration, unless fate should capriciously contract the mouths of his descendants to such a degree as to render its use inconvenient. This elegant symbol, after passing through the hands of a long train of persons, who had each been more able than another to use it effectively, came at length into the possession of the individual now addressing us—a person evidently qualified to do full justice to the intentions of his ancestor.

It was, therefore, with the apprehension of something awful, that after the conclusion of the story, and the introduction of supper, I took a place at the well-spread board. In sitting down, I cast a look at the Mouth. It was hovering, like a prodigious rainbow, over the horizon of the table, uncertain where to pitch itself. There was an air of terrible resolution about it, which made me almost tremble for what was to ensue. It was evident that we were to have "a scene."

The Mouth—for so it might be termed *par excellence*—was preferred by acclamation to the head of the table,—a distinction awarded, as I afterwards understood, not so much on account of its superior greatness, as in consideration of its seniority, though I am sure it deserved the *pas* on both accounts. The inferior and junior mouths all sat down at different distances from the great Mouth, like satellites round a mighty planet. It uttered a short, gentleman-like grace, and then began to ask its neighbours what they would have. Some asked for one thing, some for another, and in a short time all were served except itself. For its own part it complained of weak appetite, and expressed a fear that it should not be able to take anything at all. I could scarcely credit the declaration. It added, in a singularly prim tone of voice, that, for its part, it admired the taste of Beau Tibbs in Goldsmith—"Something nice, and a little will do. I hate your immense loads of meat; that's country all over." Hereupon, I plucked up courage, and ventured to look at it again. It was still terrible, though placid. Its expression was that of a fresh and strong warrior, who hesitates a moment to consider into what part of a thick battle he shall plunge himself, or what foes he shall select as worthy of particular attack. Its look belied its word; but again I was thrown back by its words belying

its look. It said to a neighbour of mine, that it thought it might perhaps manage the half of the tail of one of the herrings at his elbow, if he would be so kind as carve. Was there ever such a puzzling mouth! I was obliged again to give credit to words; yet again was I disappointed. My neighbour thinking it absurd to mince such a matter as a "Glasgow magistrate," handed up a whole one to the chairman. The Mouth received it with a torrent of refusals and remonstrances, in the midst of which it began to eat, and I heard it continue to mumble forth expostulations, in a fainter and fainter tone, at the intervals of bites, for a few seconds; till, behold, the whole corporate substance of the burghal dignitary had melted away to a long meagre skeleton! When done, its remonstrances changed into a wonder how it should have got through so plump a fish; it was perfectly astonishing; it had never eaten a whole herring in its life before; it was an unaccountable miracle.

I did not hear the latter sentences of its wonderments; but, towards the conclusion, heard the word "fowl" distinctly pronounced. The fowls lying to my hand, I found myself under the necessity of entering into conference with it, though I felt a mortal disinclination to look it in the mouth, lest I should betray some symptom of emotion inconsistent with good manners. Drawing down my features into a resolute pucker, and mentally vowing I would speak to it though it should blast me, I cast my eyes slowly and cautiously towards it, and made inquiry as to its choice of bits. In return for my interrogation, I received a polite convulsion, intended for a smile, and a request, out of which I only caught the important words, "breast" and "wing." I made haste to execute the order; and, on handing away the desired viands, received from the mouth another grateful convulsion, and then, to my great relief, all was over!

Well, thought I, at this juncture, a herring and a fragment of fowl are no such great matters; perhaps the Mouth will prove quite a natural mouth after all. In brief space, however, the chairman's plate was announced as again empty; and I heard it receive, discuss, and answer various proposals of replenishment made to it by its more immediate neighbours. I thought I should escape; but no—the fowl was really so good that it thought it would trouble me for another breast, if I would be so kind, &c. I was of course obliged to look at it again, in order to receive its request in proper form; when neglecting this time my former preparations of face, I had nearly committed myself by looking it full in the mouth with my eyes wide open, and without having screwed my facial muscles into their former resolute astringency. However, instantly apprehending the amount of its demands, my glance at the Mouth fortunately required to be only momentary, and I found immediate relief from all danger in the ensuing business of carving. Yet even that glance was in itself a dreadful trial—it sufficed to inform me that the Mouth was now more terrible than before—that there was a fearful vivacity about it, a promptitude, an alacrity, and energy, which it did not formerly exhibit. Should this increase, thought I, it will soon be truly dreadful. I handed up a whole fowl to it, in a sort of desperation. It made no remonstrances, as in the case of the herring, at the abundance of my offering. So far from that, it seemed to forgive my disobedience with the utmost goodwill; received the fowl, dispatched it with silence and celerity, and then began to look abroad for further prey. Indeed, it now began to crack jokes upon itself—a sportive species of suicide. It spoke of the spoon; lamented that, after all,

there should be no soups at table whereon it might have exhibited itself; and finally vowed that it would visit the deficiencies of the supper upon the dessert, even unto the third and fourth dish of *blancmange*.

The proprietor of the mouth then laid down the spoon upon the table, there to lie in readiness till such time as he should find knives and forks of no farther service—as the Scottish soldiery in former times used to lay their shields upon the ground while making use of their spears. I now gave up all hopes of the Mouth observing any propriety in its future transactions. Having finished my own supper, I resolved to set myself down to observe all its sayings and doings. Its placidity was now gone—its air of self-possession lost. New powers seemed to be every moment developing themselves throughout its vast form—new and more terrible powers. It was beginning to have a *wild look!* It was evident that it was now *fleshed*—that its naturally savage disposition formerly dormant for want of excitement, was now rising tumultuously within it—that it would soon perform such deeds as would scare us all!

It had engaged itself before I commenced my observations, upon a roast gigot of mutton, which happened to lie near it. This it soon nearly finished. It then cast a look of fearful omen at a piece of cold beef, which lay immediately beyond, and which, being placed within reach by some kind neighbour, it immediately commenced to, with as much fierceness as it had just exemplified in the case of the mutton. The beef also was soon laid waste, and another look of extermination was forthwith cast at a broken pigeon-pie, which lay still farther off. Hereupon the eye had scarcely alighted, when the man nearest it, with laudable promptitude, handed it upwards. Scarcely was it laid on the altar of destruction, when it disappeared too, and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth look, were successively cast at other dishes, which the different members of the party as promptly sent away, and which the Mouth as promptly dispatched.

By this time all the rest of the party were lying upon their oars, observing with leisurely astonishment the progress of the surviving, and, as it appeared to them, endless feeder. He went on, rejoicing in his strength, unheeding their idleness and wonder, his very soul apparently engrossed in the grand business of devouring. They seemed to enter into a sort of tacit compact, or agreement, to indulge and facilitate him in his progress, by making themselves, as it were, his servitors. Whatever dish he looked at, therefore, over the wide expanse of the table, immediately disappeared from its place. One after another, they trooped off towards the head of the table, like the successive brigades which Wellington dispatched, at Waterloo, against a particular held of French artillery; and still, dish after dish, like said brigades, came successively away, broken, diminished, annihilated. Fish, flesh, and fowl disappeared at the glance of that awful eye, as the Roman fleet withered and vanished before the grand burning-glass of Archimedes. The end of all things seemed at hand. The Mouth was arrived at a perfect transport of voracity! It seemed no more capable of restraining itself than some great engine, full of tremendous machinery, which cannot stop of itself. It had no self-will. It was an unaccountable being. It was a separate creature, independent of the soul. It was not a human thing at all. It was everything that was superhuman—everything that was immense—inconceivably enormous! All objects seemed reeling and toppling on towards it, like the foam-bells upon a mighty current, floating silently on towards the orifice of some prodigious sea-cave. It was like the whirlpool of

Maëlstrom, everything that comes within the vortex of which, for miles around, is sure of being caught, inextricably involved, whirled round and round and round, and then down that monstrous gulph—that mouth of the mighty ocean, the lips of which are overwhelming waves, whose teeth are prodigious rocks, and whose belly is the great abyss!

Here I grew dizzy, fainted, and—I never saw the Mouth again.

RICHARD SINCLAIR;

OR, THE POOR PRODIGAL IN THE AISLE.

BY THOMAS AIRD.

CHAPTER I.

WITH many noble qualities—firmness, piety, integrity, and a thorough affection for his family—the father of the poor prodigal, Richard Sinclair, had many of the hard points of the Scottish character; a want of liberality in his estimate of others, particularly of their religious qualities; a jealousy about his family prerogative, when it was needless to assert it; and a liking for discipline, or, as he styled it, nurture, without tact to modify its applications. Towards his eldest son—a shy and affectionate youth—his behaviour, indeed, seemed distinctly opposite to what we may characterise as its usual expression—overbearing gravity. Without this son's advice, he never ventured on any speculation that seemed doubtful. He was softly amenable to the mild wisdom of the lad, and paid it a quiet deference, of which, indeed, he sometimes appeared to be ashamed, as a degree of weakness in himself. But the youth had never disobeyed his parents' will in any one particular; he was grave and gentle; and his father, who had been brought up amidst a large and rugged family, and was thus accustomed to rather stormy usages, was now at a loss, in matters of rebuke, how to meet this new species of warfare, which lay in mild and quiet habits, and eventually became afraid of the censure which was felt in the affectionate silence of his eldest son.

This superiority might have offended old Sinclair's self-love; but the youth, as already stated, made ample amends, by paying in his turn a scrupulous and entire deference to his parent, whom he thus virtually controlled, as a good wife knows to rule her husband, by not seeming to rule at all. From this subdued tone of his favourite prerogative in the father before us there was a reaction—something like a compensation to the parental authority—which began to press too hard upon his second son Richard, who, being of a bolder character than his brother, was less scrupulously dealt with; besides that the froward temperament of this younger boy frequently offended against what his father honestly deemed propriety and good rule.

He lost no opportunity, when Richard had done anything in the slightest degree wrong, of checking him with disproportioned censure, and of reminding him of what he owed to his parents; and this was repeated, till bearing blame in the boy became a substitute for gratitude—till the sense of obliga-

tion, instead of being a special call to love, was distinctly felt to be an intolerable burden. From all these circumstances there naturally grew up a shyness betwixt father and son, which was unintentionally aggravated by Richard's mother, who, aware of her husband's severe temper, tried to qualify it by her own soft words and deeds of love. This only brought out the evil more distinctly in its hard outline; and the very circumstance that she constantly tried to explain into good his father's austerity became her own refutation, and stamped that austerity as a great degree of tyranny.

Home thus became associated with disagreeable feelings to young Richard Sinclair; who, being a boy of a giddy character, and naturally self-willed, could not cling to the good, despite of the admixture of evil. He neglected his books, fell into gross irregularities; and the admonitions of his father, rendered useless from the above miserable system of discipline, were now, when most needed, thoroughly despised. The death of his elder brother, by which he was left an only son, softened for a while the harsh intercourse which subsisted between Richard and his father, and checked the youth for a little in his bad habits. But vice overcame him anew; and, growing daily worse, he at length completed the character of the prodigal, by running off to sea, hardening his heart against his father's worth, and heedless of the soft affection of his mother.

The hardships of a sea-faring life, heightened by a series of peculiar misfortunes, still farther aggravated by a long course of bad health, gradually subdued the young prodigal's heart; and after the lapse of several years we find him on his way returning to his native village, clad in the meanest attire, slow and irregular in his step; his countenance, besides being of a dead yellow hue from late jaundice, thin and worn to the bone; yet improved in his moral nature, caring not for pride, ready to forgive, and anxious to be forgiven; and, above all, yearning to confess his crimes and sorrows to a mother's unchanging love.

About the noon of an October day, he reached the churchyard of his native parish, his heart impelling him first to visit the burying-ground of his family, under the fear, not the less striking because altogether vague, that he might there see a recent grave; for he had heard nothing of his parents since his first departure to sea. As he entered the graveyard by a small postern, he saw a funeral coming in by the main gate on the opposite side; and wishing not to be observed, he turned into a small plantation of poplars and silver firs, which hid the place of graves from the view of the clergyman's manse windows. Onward came the sable group slowly to the middle of the churchyard, where lay, indicating the deep parallel grave beside it, the heap of fat, clammy earth, from which two or three ragged boys were taking handfuls, to see, from its restless crumbling, whether it was the dust of the wicked, which, according to a popular belief, never lies still for a moment. The dark crowd took their places round the grave; a little bustle was heard as the coffin was uncovered; it was lowered by the creaking cords, and again the heads of the company were all narrowly bent over it for a moment. Not a sound was heard in the air, save the flitting wing of some little bird among the boughs; the ruffling of another as, with bill engulfed in its feathers, it picked the insects from its skin; and the melancholy cry of a single chaffinch, which foretold the coming rain.

In natural accordance with the solemnity of the mourners before him, our youth, as he stood in the plantation, raised his hat; and when the crowd drew back to give room to the sexton

and his associates to dash in the earth, he leant upon the wall, looking earnestly over it, to recognise, if possible, the prime mourner. At the head of the grave, more forward a little than the others, and apart in his sad privilege, stood a man, apparently about sixty years of age, of a strong frame,—in which yet there was trembling,—and a fine open bald forehead; and, notwithstanding that the face of the mourner was compressed with the lines of unusual affliction, and bowed down over his hat, which with both hands was pressed upon his mouth, Richard saw him and knew him but too well—Oh, God! his own father! And wildly the youth's eyes rambled around the throng, to penetrate the mystery of his own loss, till on his dim eyeballs reeled the whole group, now scattered and melted to mist, now gathered and compressed into one black, shapeless heap.

But now the thick air began to twinkle, as it still darkened; and the rain, which to the surprise of all had been kept up so long, began to fall out in steep-down streams from the low-hung clouds, driving the black train from the half-finished grave, to mix with a throng of other people, apparently assembling for public worship, who ran along the sides of the church in haste to reach the doors. The bell began to toll, but ceased almost in a minute; the clergyman hurried by in his white bands; and before Richard could leave the plantation and advance into the churchyard,—perhaps for the purpose of inquiring who was the person just entombed,—every one was in save that bareheaded man—God bless him!—who, heedless of the rain, still stood by the sexton, whose spade was now beating round the wet turf of the compacted grave. The young prodigal had not the heart, under a most awful sense of his own errors, which now overcame him, to advance to his afflicted father. On the contrary, to avoid his observation, he slunk away behind the church, and by a door, which likewise admitted to an old staircase leading to a family division of the gallery, he got into a back aisle, thickly peopled with spectral marbles, which, through two or three small panes, admitted a view of the interior of the church. "Have I lived not to know," said he to himself, "when comes God's most holy Sabbath-day? Assuredly, this loss of reckoning, this confusion of heart, is of very hell itself. But hold—to-day is Monday; then it must be the day after a solemn commemoration, in this place, of Christ's bleeding sacrifice for men. I shall sit me down on this slab a while, and see if there may be any good thing for me—any gleam of the glorious shield that wards off evil thoughts and the fears of the soul—any strong preparation of faith to take me up by the hand, and lead me through my difficulties. At all events, I shall try to pray with the good for the mourners, that claim from me a thousand prayers: and God rest that dead one!"

Owing to the unusual darkness in the church, the twenty-third psalm was chosen by the clergyman, as one that could be sung by most of the congregation without referring to the book; and its beautiful pastoral devotion suited well with the solemn dedication which yesterday had been made of a little flock to the care of the Great Shepherd, and with their hopes of His needful aid. And the sweet voices of the young, who in early piety had vowed themselves to God, seemed to have caught the assured and thrilling song of the redeemed; and their white robes, as they rose to pray, twinkled like glimpses of angels' parting wings, bringing home more deeply to the heart of the poor youth in the aisle a sense of his misery as an alien and an outcast from the ordinances of salvation.

Richard made an effort to attend to the instructions of the clergyman; but

his heart was soon borne away from attention; and so anxious did he become in the new calculation, which of his father's family it might be whom he had just seen interred, that he could not refrain from going out before the church windows and looking at the new grave. Heedless of being seen, he measured it by stepping, and was convinced, from its length, that either his mother or his sister Mary must be below. "God forbid!" he ejaculated, "that it should be my poor mother's grave! that she should be gone for ever, ere I have testified my sense of all her love!" It struck him, with a new thought of remorse, that he was wishing the other alternative, that it might be his sister Mary's. And then he thought upon early days, when she who was his first playmate led him with her little hand abroad in summer days to the green meadows, and taught him to weave the white-fingered rushes, and introduced him, because she was his elder, to new sports and playfellows; whose heart, he knew, would brook to lie beneath the cold flowers of the spring sooner than give up its love for him, prodigal though he was; and how was the alternative much better, if it was she whom he had lost! As he made these reflections, he was again sauntering into the aisle, where, sitting down in his former seat, the sad apprehension that his mother was dead laid siege to his heart. Her mild image, in sainted white, rose to his mind's eye; and she seemed to bend over him, and to say to him, "Come, my care-worn boy, and tell me how it has fared with you in the hard world?" This vision soon gave place to severe realities; and in bitter sadness he thought of her who came each night to his bedside when he was a little child, to kiss him, and arrange the clothes around him that his little body might be warm.

With a reeling unsteadiness of mind which, from very earnestness, could not be stayed upon its object, he tried to remember his last interview with her, and the tenor of his last letter to her, to find out what kind expressions he had used, till, painfully conscious that he could muster little to make up an argument of his love, he was again left to guess his mother's anguish of soul in her last hour over his neglect, and to grapple with the conviction that his own folly had brought her down prematurely to the grave. At length his heart, becoming passive amidst the very multitude and activity of reflections that were tugging at it from all sides, yielded to the weariness which the day's fatigue, acting upon his frame, worn by late fever, had induced, and he fell into a deep sleep. When he awoke, the voice of the clergyman had ceased, and all was silence in the church; the interior of which as he looked through the small pane, he saw had been darkened by the shutting of the window-boards. Next moment he glanced at the aisle door and saw it closed upon him. Then looking round all over the place, with that calmness which signifies a desperate fear at hand, "Here I am, then!" he exclaimed; "if that door be locked upon me, as I dread it is!" Cautiously he went to it, as if afraid of being resolved in his dreadful apprehension; and, after first feeling with his hand that the bolt was drawn upon him, he tried to open it, and was made distinctly aware of his horrid captivity. Sharply he turned aghast, as if to address some one behind him; then turning again to the door, he shook it with all his strength, in the hope that some one might yet be lingering in the churchyard, and so might hear him. No one, however, came to his assistance; and now the reflection burst full and black upon him, that here he might remain unheard till he died of hunger. His heart and countenance fell, when he remembered how remote the churchyard was from the village, and from the public way, and how long it was till next Sun-

day should come round. From boyhood recollection he remembered well this same aisle door; that it was black on the outside, with here and there large white commas to represent tears; and that it was very thick, and yet farther strengthened by being studded with a great number of large iron nails.

"Yet I must try to the very utmost," he said, "either to break it or make myself be heard by the inmates of the manse, which is my best chance of release." Accordingly he borrowed as much impetus as the breadth of the vault allowed him, and flung himself upon the door in a series of attacks, shouting at the same time with all his might. But the door stood firm as a rock despite of him; nor could he distinguish, as he listened from time to time, the slightest symptoms of his having been heard by any one. He went to the small grated window which lighted this house of death, and after watching at it for some time, he saw an old woman pass along a footpath beyond the graveyard, with a bundle of sticks upon her head; but she never seemed to hear him when he called upon her. A little afterwards he saw two boys sauntering near the gate of the burying-ground; but though they heard him when he cried, it only made them scamper off, to all appearance mightily terrified.

Chapter II.

With the calmness almost of despair, when the closing eve took away his chance of seeing any more stray passengers that day, the poor youth groped his way to his marble slab, and again sat down with a strange vacuity of heart, as if it would refuse further thought of his dismal situation. A new fear came over him, however, when daylight thickened at the grated window of his low room, and the white marbles grew dark around him. And not without creeping horror did he remember that from this very aisle it was that old Johnny Hogg, a former sexton, was said to have seen a strange vile animal issue forth one moonlight night, run to a neighbouring stream, and after lapping a little, hurry back, trotting over the blue graves, and slinking through beneath the table stones, as if afraid of being shut out from its dull, fat haunt. Hurriedly, yet with keen inspection, was young Sinclair fascinated to look around him over the dim floor; and while the horrid apprehension came over him, that he was just on the point of seeing the two eyes of the gloating beast, white and muddy from its unhallowed surfeits, he drew up his feet on the slab on which he sat, lest it should crawl over them. A thousand tales—true to boyish impressions—crowded on his mind; and by this rapid movement of sympathetic associations, enough of itself, while it lasts, to make the stoutest heart nervous, and from the irritation of his body from other causes, so much was his mind startled from its propriety that he thought he heard the devil ranging through the empty pews of the church; and there seemed to flash before his eyes a thousand hurrying shapes, condemned and fretted ghosts of malignant aspect, that cannot rest in their wormy graves, and milky-curdled babes of untimely birth, that are buried in twilights, never to see the sun.

Soon, however, these silly fears went off, and the tangible evil of his situation again stood forth, and drove him to renew his cries for assistance, and his attacks upon the door, ere he should be quite enfeebled by hunger and disease. Again he had to sit down, after spending his strength in vain.

By degrees, he fell into a stupor of

sleep, peopled with strange dreams, in all of which, from natural accordance with his waking conviction that he had that day seen his mother's burial, her image was the central figure. In danger she was with him—in weariness—in captivity; and when he seemed to be struggling for life, under delirious fever, then, too, she was with him, with her soft assuaging kiss, which was pressed upon his throbbing brow, till his frenzy was cooled away, and he lay becalmed in body and in spirit beneath her love. Under the last modification of his dream, he stood by confused waters, and saw his mother drowning in the floods. He heard her faintly call upon his name; her arms were outstretched to him for help, as she was borne fast away into the dim and wasteful ocean; and, unable to resist this appeal, he stripped off his clothes and plunged in to attempt her rescue. So vivid was this last part of his vision, that in actual correspondence with the impulse of his dream, the poor prodigal in the aisle threw off his clothes to the shirt to prepare himself for swimming to her deliverance. One or two cold ropy drops, which at this moment fell from the vaulted roof upon his neck, woke him distinctly, and recalled him to a recollection of his situation as a captive. But being unable to account for his being naked, he thought that he had lost, or was about to lose, his reason; and, weeping aloud like a little child, he threw himself upon his knees, and cried to God to keep fast his heart and mind from that dismal alienation. He was yet prostrate when he heard feet walking on the echoing pavement of the church; and at the same time a light shone round about him, filling the whole aisle, and showing distinctly the black letters on the white tombstones.

His first almost insane thought was that a miraculous answer was given to his prayer, and that, like the two apostles of old, he had won an angel from heaven to release him from his midnight prison. But the footsteps went away again by the door, and ceased entirely; whilst at the same time the light was withdrawn, leaving him to curse his folly, which, under an absurd hope, had lost an opportunity of immediate disenthralment. He was about to call aloud, to provoke a return of the visitation, when, through the grated window of the aisle, he observed a light among the graves, which he set himself to reconnoitre. It was one of those raw, unwholesome nights, choked up with mists to the very throat, which thicken the breath of old men with asthma, and fill graveyards with gross and rotten beings; and, though probably not more than twenty yards distant, Sinclair could not guess what the light was, so tangled and bedimmed was it with the spongy vapours.

At length he heard human voices, and was glad to perceive the light approaching his window. When the men, whom he now saw were two in number, had got within a few yards of him, he called out,—

"I pray you, good people, be not alarmed; I have been locked up in this aisle to-day, and must die of hunger in it if you do not get me out. You can get into the church, and I doubt not you will find the key of this aisle-door in the sexton's closet. Now, I hope you have enough of manhood not to let me remain in this horrid place from any silly fears on your part."

Instead of answering to this demand, the fellows took instantly to their heels, followed by the vehement reproaches of our hero, whose heart at the same time was smitten by the bitter reflection, that every chance of attracting attention to his captivity was likely to be neutralized by the superstitious fears of such as might hear him from his vault. In a few minutes the light again approached, and after much whispering betwixt

themselves, one of the men demanded who and what the prisoner was.

"I can only tell you farther," replied Sinclair, "that I fell asleep in this place during the sermon,—no very creditable confession, you will observe,—and that, when I awoke, I found myself fairly entrapped."

The men retired round the church, and with joy Richard heard next minute the rattling of the keys as they were taken from the sexton's closet. In another minute he heard the door of his dungeon tried; it opened readily; and with a start, as if they thought it best at once to rush upon their danger, his two deliverers, whom he recognised to be of his native village, advanced a little into the aisle, the foremost bearing the light, which he held forward and aloft, looking below it into the interior, to be aware for what sort of captive they had opened. No sooner did Sinclair stand disclosed to them, naked as he was to the shirt—for he had not yet got on his clothes—than the sternmost man, with something between a yell and a groan, bended on his knees, whilst his hair bristled in the extremity of his terror, and catching hold of his companion's limbs, he looked through betwixt them upon the naked spirit of the aisle. The foremost man lowered the light by inches, and cried aloud,—

"Fear-fa' me! take haud o' me, Geordie Heart! It's the yellow dead rising from their graves. Eh! there's the lightning! and is yon no an auld crooked man i' the corner?"

"Will Balmer! Will Balmer! whaur are ye?" cried the other, from between Will's very knees, which, knocking upon the prostrate man's cheeks, made him chatter and quiver in his wild outcry.

"Oh! there's the lightning again! Gin we could but meet wife and bairns ance mair!" ejaculated the foremost man.

"Lord have mercy on my widow and sma' family!" echoed the sternmost.

"Tout! it's but the laird's drucken mulatto after a'!" said the former, gathering a little confidence.

"Oh, if it were! or but a man wi' the jaundice, our days might be lengthened," cried the latter.

Richard advanced to explain; but at that moment the dull firmament in the east, which had been lightning from time to time (as often happens previously to very rainy weather), opened with another sheeted blaze of white fire, the reflection of which on Richard's yellow face, as he came forward, seemed to the terrified rustics a peculiar attribute of his nature. With a groan, he in the van tried a backward retreat; but being straitened in the legs, he tumbled over his squatted companion. Leaving his neighbour, however, to sit still upon his knees, he that was the foremost man gathered himself up so well, that he crept away on his hands and feet, till, getting right below the bell-rope at the end of the church, he ventured to rise and begin to jow it, making the bell toll at an unusual rate. The inmates of the manse were immediately alarmed; and first came the minister's man, who demanded the meaning of such ill-timed ringing.

"Oh! Tam Jaffray! Tam Jaffray! sic a night's in this kirkyard! If sae be it's ordeened that I may ring an' live, I'll haud to the tow. Oh! Tam Jaffray! Tam Jaffray! what's become o' puir Geordie Heart? If the Wandering Jew o' Jerusalem, or the Yellow Fever frae Jamaica, is no dancing mother-naked in the aisle, then it behoves to be the dead rising frae their graves. I trust we'll a' be found prepared! Rin for a lantern, Tam.—Eh! look to that lightning!"

A light was soon brought from the manse; and a number of people from the village having joined the original alarmists, a considerable muster advanced to the aisle door just as Sinclair was stepping from it. Taking the light

from one of the countrymen, he returned to the relief of the poor villager, who was still upon his knees, and who, with great difficulty, was brought to comprehend an explanation of the whole affair. The crowd made way as Sinclair proceeded to leave the graveyard; but whether it was that they were indignant because the neighbourhood had been so much disturbed, or whether they considered that proper game was afoot for sportive insolence, they began to follow and shout after him—

"Come back, ye yellow neegur! we'll no send ye!—stop him! Come back, ye squiff, and we'll gie ye a dead subject!—Stop the resurrectionist!—After him, gie him a paik, and see if he's but a batch o' badger skins dyed yellow—hurrah!"

Sinclair wishing, for several reasons, to be clear at once of the mob, was in the act of springing over the dyke into the plantation already mentioned, when he was struck by a stick on the head, which brought him back senseless to the ground. The crowd was instantly around the prostrate youth, and in the caprice or better pity of human nature, began to be sorry for his pale condition.

"It was a pity to strike the puir lad that gate," said one. "Some folk shouldna been sae rash the day, I think," remarked another. "Stand back," cried Tam Jaffray, pushing from right to left; "stand back, and gie the puir fallow air. Back, Jamieson, wi' your shauchled shins; it was you that cried first that he was a resurrectionist."

The clergyman now advanced and asked what was the matter.

"It's only a yellow yorlin we've catched in the aisle," cried an insolent clown, who aspired to be the prime wit of the village; "he was a bare gorblin a few minutes syne, and now he's full feathered." This provoked a laugh from groundlings of the same stamp, and the fellow, grinning himself, was tempted to try another bolt,—"And he's gayan weel tamed by this time."

"Peace, fellow," said the minister, who had now seen what was wrong; "peace, sir, and do not insult the unfortunate. I am ashamed of all this."

By the directions of the clergyman, the poor prodigal was carried into the manse, where he soon recovered from the immediate stunning effects of the blow he had received.

"How is all this?" was his first question of surprise, addressed to his host. "May I request to know, sir, why I am here?"

"In virtue of a rash blow, which we all regret," answered the minister.

"I crave your pardon, sir," returned the youth. "I can now guess that I am much indebted to your kindness."

"May we ask you, young man," said the clergyman, "how it has happened that you have so alarmed our peaceful neighbourhood?"

The poor prodigal succinctly stated the way of his imprisonment in the aisle; and with this explanation the charitable old clergyman seemed perfectly satisfied. Not so, however, was his ruling elder, who, deeming his presence and authority indispensable in any matter for which the parish bell could be rung, had early rushed to the scene of alarm, and was now in the manse, at the head of a number of the villagers. He, on the contrary, saw it necessary to remark (glancing at his superior for approbation),—

"Sae, mind, young man, in times future, what comes of sleeping in the time of two pecous and yedifying discoorses."

"A good caution, John," said the mild old minister; "but we must make allowances."

"Was it you that struck me down?" said Richard eagerly to an old man, who, with evident sorrow working in his hard muscular face, stood watching this scene with intense interest, and who, indeed, was his own father.

Smitten to the heart by this sudden question of the youth, ashamed of his own violent spirit on such a night, and grieved, after the explanation given, for the condition of the poor lad before him, old Sinclair groaned, turned quickly half round, shifted his feet in the agony of avowal,—then seizing his unknown prodigal boy by the hand, he wrung it eagerly, and said,—

"There's my hand, young man, in the first place; and now, it was me indeed that struck you down, but I thought——"

"Oh! my prophetic conscience!" interrupted the poor prodigal, whilst he looked his father ruefully in the face, and returned fervently the squeeze of his hand. "Make no apologies to me, thou good old man; thy blow was given under a most just dispensation."

"I sent two neighbours," said the old man, still anxious to explain, "to see that all was right about the grave. I heard the alarm, and came off wi' my stick in my hand. I heard them crying to stop ye, for ye were a resurrectionist. I saw ye jumping suspiciously into the planting. Ye maun forgie me the rest, young man, for I thought ye had been violating the grave of a beloved wife."

"My own poor mother!" sobbed forth the prodigal.

Old Sinclair started—his strong chest heaved—the recollection of his rash blow, together with the circumstance that it had been dispensed on such a solemn night, and near the new grave of one whose gentle spirit had been but too much troubled by the harshness and waywardness of both husband and son, came over his heart with the sudden conviction that his boy and himself were justly punished by the same blow, for their mutual disrespect in former years. Yearning pity over that son's unhappy appearance, and the natural flow of a father's heart, long subdued on behalf of his poor lost prodigal, were mingled in the old man's deep emotion; and he sought relief by throwing himself in his boy's arms, and weeping on his neck.

His sturdy nature soon recovered itself a little; yet the bitter spray was winked from his compressed eyes as he shook his head; and the lower part of his face quivered with unusual affliction, as he said in a hoarse whisper—

"My own Richard!—my man, has your father lived to strike you to the ground like a brute beast, and you sae ill?—on the very day, too, o' your mother's burial, that loved ye aye sae weel! But come away wi' me to your father's house, for ye are sick as death, and the auld man that used ye ower ill is sair humbled the night, Richard!"

The prodigal's heart could not stand this confession of a father. His young bosom heaved as if about to be rent to pieces; the *mother*, and *hysterica passio* of old Lear, rose in his straitened throat, overmastering the struggling respiration, and he fell back in a violent fit. His agonized parent ran to the door, as if seeking assistance, he knew not what or where; then checking himself in a moment, and hastening back, yet without looking on his son, he grasped the clergyman strongly by the hand, crying out, "Is he gone?—is my callant dead?"

Ordering the people to withdraw from around the prostrate youth, whose head was now supported by the clergyman's beautiful and compassionate daughter, the kind old pastor led forward the agonised father, and pointing to his reviving son, told him that all would soon be well again. With head depressed upon his bosom, his hard hands slowly wringing each other, while they were wetted with the tears which rained from his glazed eyes, old Sinclair stood looking down upon the ghastly boy, whose eye was severely swollen, whilst his cheek was stained with the clotted blood which had flowed from the wound above the temples, inflicted by his own father.

After standing a while in this posi-

tion, the old man drew a white napkin from his pocket, and, as if himself unable for the task, he gave it to one of his neighbours, and pointed to the blood on the face of his prodigal boy, signifying that he wished it wiped away. This was done accordingly; and, in a few moments more, Richard rose, recovered from his fit, and modestly thanking the clergyman and his beautiful daughter for their attentions to him, he signified his resolve to go home immediately with his father. The kind old minister would fain have kept him all night, alleging the danger of exposing himself in such a state to the night air; but the youth was determined in his purpose; and old Sinclair cut short the matter by shaking the hand of his pastor, whilst, without saying a word, he looked him kindly in the face to express his thanks, and then by leading his son away by the arm.

The villagers, who had crowded into the manse, judging this one of those levelling occasions when they might intrude into the best parlour, allowed the father and son to depart without attempting immediately to follow—nature teaching them that they had no right to intermeddle with the sacred communings of the son and father's repentance and forgiveness, or with the sorrow of their common bereavement. Yet the rude throng glanced at the minister, as if surprised and disappointed that the thing had ended so simply; then slunk out of the room, apprehensive, probably, of some rebuke from him. The ruling elder, however, remained behind, and wherefore not?

THE BARLEY FEVER—AND REBUKE.

By D. M. Moir ("Delta").

Sages their solemn een may steek,
And raise a philosophic reek,
And, physically, causes seek
In clime and season;
But tell me *Whisky's* name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.—*Burns.*

On the morning after the business of the playhouse happened,* I had to take my breakfast in my bed,—a thing very uncommon for me, being generally up by cock-craw, except on Sunday mornings whiles, when ilka ane, according to the bidding of the Fourth Commandment, has a license to do as he likes,—having a desperate sore head, and a squeamishness at the stomach, occasioned, I jalouse, in a great measure from what Mr Glen and me had discussed at Widow Grassie's, in the shape of warm toddy, over our cracks concerning what is called the agricultural and the manufacturing interests. So our wife, puir body, pat a thimbleful of brandy—Thomas Mixem's real—into my first cup of tea, which had a wonderful virtue in putting all things to rights; so that I was up and had shapit a pair of leddy's corsets (an article in which I sometimes dealt) before ten o'clock, though, the morning being gey cauld, I didna dispense with my Kilmarnock.

At eleven in the forenoon, or thereabouts,—maybe five minutes before or after, but nae matter,—in comes my crony Maister Glen, rather dazed-like

* See *ante*, "My First and Last Play," p. 394.

about the een, and wi' a large piece of white sticking-plaister, about half-a-nail wide, across one of his cheeks, and over the brig o' his nose; giving him a wauff, outlandish, and rather blackguard sort of appearance, so that I was a thocht uneasy at what neebours might surmeese concerning our intimacy; but the honest man accounted for the thing in a very feasible manner, from the falling down on that side of his head of one of the brass candlesticks, while he was lying on his braidside, before ane of the furms in the stramash.

His purpose of calling was to tell me that he couldna leave the town without looking in upon me to bid me fareweel; mair betoken, as he intended sending in his son Mungo wi' the carrier for a trial, to see how the line of life pleased him, and how I thocht he wad answer —a thing which I was glad came from his side of the house, being likely to be in the upshot the best for both parties. Yet I thocht he wad find our way of doing so canny and comfortable, that it wasna very likely he could ever start objections; and I must confess, that I lookit forrit with nae sma' degree of pride, seeing the probability of my sune having the son of a Lammermuir farmer sitting cross-leggit, cheek for jowl wi' me, on the board, and bound to serve me at all lawful times, by night and day, by a regular indenture of five years. Maister Glen insisted on the laddie having a three months' trial; and then, after a wee show of standing out, just to make him aware that I could be elsewhere fitted if I had a mind, I agreed that the request was reasonable, and that I had nae yearthly objections to conforming wi't. So, after giein' him his meridian, and a bit of shortbread, we shook hands, and parted in the understanding, that his son would arrive on the tap of limping Jamie the carrier's cart, in the course, say, of a fortnight.

Through the hale course of the forepart of the day, I remained geyan queerish, as if something was working about my inwards, and a droll pain atween my een. The wife saw the case I was in, and advised me, for the sake of the fresh air, to take a step into the bit garden, and try a hand at the spade, the smell of the fresh earth being likely to operate as a cordial; but na—it wadna do; and whan I came in at ane o'clock to my dinner, the steam of the fresh broth, instead of making me feel as usual as hungry as a hawk, was like to turn my stamach, while the sight of the sheep's-head, ane o' the primest anes I had seen the hale season, made me as sick as a dog; so I could dae naething but take a turn out again, and swig awa' at the sma' beer that never seemed able to slocken my drouth. At lang and last, I mindit having heard Andrew Redbeak, the excise-offisher, say, that naething ever pat him right after a debosh, except something they ca' a bottle of soda-water; so my wife dispatched Benjie to the place where he kent it could be found, and he returned in a jiffie with a thing like a blacking-bottle below his daidly, as he was bidden. There being a wire ower the cork, for some purpose or ither, or maybe just to look neat, we had some fight to get it torn away, but at last we succeeded. I had turned about for a jug, and the wife was rummaging for a screw, while Benjie was fiddling away wi' his fingers at the cork—sauf us! a' at ance it gaed a thud like thunder, driving the cork ower puir Benjie's head, while it spouted up in his een like a fire-engine, and I had only just time to throw down the jug, and up with the bottle to my mouth. Luckily, for the sixpence it cost, there was a drap o't left, which tasted by all the world just like brisk dish-washings; but, for a' that, it had a wonderful power of setting me to rights; and my noddle in a while began to clear up, like a March-day after a heavy shower.

I mind very weel too, on the afternoon of the dividual day, that my door-

neebour, Thomas Burlings, pappit in; and, in our twa-handit crack ower the counter, after asking me in a dry, curious way, if I had come by nae skaith in the business of the play, he said, the thing had now spread far and wide, and was making a great noise in the world. I thocht the body a thocht sharp in his observes; so I pretended to take it quite lightly, proceeding in my shaping-out a pair of buckskin-breeches, which I was making for ane of the duke's huntsmen; so, seeing he was aff the scent, he said in a mair jocose way—"Weel, speaking about buckskins, I'll tell ye a gude story about that."

"Let us hear't," said I; for I was in that sort of queerish way, that I didna care muckle about being very busy.

"Ye'se get it as I heard it," quo' Thomas; "and its no less worth telling, that it bears a gude moral application in its tail, after the same fashion that a blister does gude by sucking away the vicious humours of the body, thereby making the very pain it gies precious." And here—though maybe it was just my thocht—the body strokit his chin, and gied me a kind of half glee, as muckle as saying, "take that to ye, neebour." But I deserved it all, and couldna take it ill aff his hand, being, like mysel, ane of the elders of our kirk, and an honest enough, precccse-speaking man.

"Ye see, ye ken," said Thomas, "that the Breadalbane Fencibles, a wheen Highland birkies, were put into camp on Fisherraw links, maybe for the benefit of their douking, on account of the fiddle*—or maybe in case the French should land at the water-mouth—or maybe to gie the regiment the benefit of the sea air—or maybe to make their bare houghs hardier, for it was the winter time, frost and snaw being as plenty as ye like, and no sae scarce as pantaloons among the core, or for some ither reason, gude, bad, or indifferent, which disna muckle matter. But, ye see, the lang and the short o' the story is, that there they were encamped, man and mother's son of them, going through their dreels by day, and sleeping by night—the privates in their tents, and the offishers in their markees; living in the course of nature on their usual rations of beef and tammies, and sae on. So, ye understand me, there was nae such smart orderings of things in the army in thae days, the men not having the beef served out to them by a butcher, supplying each company or companies by a written contract, drawn up between him and the paymaster before sponsible witnesses; but ilka ane bringing what pleased him, either tripe, trotters, steaks, cow's-cheek, pluck, hough, spar-rib, jiggot, or so forth."

"'Od!" said I, "Thomas, ye crack like a minister. Where did ye happen to pick up all that knowledge?"

"Where should I have got it? but from an auld half-pay sergeant-major, that lived in our spare room, and had been out in the American war, having seen a power of service, and been twice wounded,—ance in the aff cuit, and the ither time in the cuff of the neck."

"I thocht as muckle," said I; "but say on, man; it's unco entertaining."

"Weel," continued he, "let me see where I was at when ye stoppit me; for maybe I'll hae to begin at the beginning again. For gif ye yenterrupt me, or edge in a word, or put me out by asking questions, I lose the thread of my discourse, and canna proceed."

"Ou, let me see," said I, "ye was about the contract concerning the beef."

"Preccesely," quo' Thomas, stretching out his forefinger; "ye've said it to a hair. At that time, as I was observing, the butcher didna supply a company or companies, according to the terms of a contract, drawn up before sponsible witnesses, between him and the paymaster; but the soldiers got

* *See* Dr Jamieson's "Scottish Dictionary."

beef-money along with their pay; with which said money, given them, ye observe, for said purpose, they were bound and obligated, in terms of the statute, to buy, purchase, and provide the said beef, twice a week or oftener, as it might happen; an orderly offisher making inspection of the camp-kettles regularly every forenoon at ane o'clock or thereabouts.

"So, as ye'll pay attention to observe, there was a private in Captain M'Tavish's company, the second to the left of the centre, of the name of Duncan MacAlpine, a wee, hardy, blackavised, in-knee'd creature, remarkable for naething that ever I heard tell of, except being reported to have shotten a gauger in Badenoch, or thereabouts; and for having a desperate red nose, the effects, ye observe, I daursay,—the effects of drinking malt speerits.

"Weel, week after week passed ower, and better passed ower, and Duncan played aff his tricks, like anither Herman Boaz, the slight-o'-hand juggler—him that's suspecket to be in league and paction with the deil. But ye'll hear."

"'Od, it's diverting, Thomas," said I to him; "gang on, man."

"Weel, ye see, as I was observing. Let me see, where was I at? Ou ay, having a paction wi' the deil. So, when all were watching beside the camp-kettles, some stirring them wi' spurtles, or parritch-sticks, or forks, or whatever was necessary, the orderly offisher made a point and practice of regularly coming by, about the chap of ane past meridian, as I observed to ye before, to make inspection of what ilka ane had wared his pay on; and what he had got simmering in the het water for his dinner.

"So, on the day concerning which I am about to speak, it fell out, as usual, that he happened to be making his rounds, halting a moment—or twa, maybe—before ilka pat; the man that had the charge thereof, by the way of stirring like, clapping down his lang fork, and bringing up the piece of meat, or whatever he happened to be making kail of, to let the inspector see whether it was lamb, pork, beef, mutton, or veal. For, ye observe," continued Thomas, gieing me, as I took it to mysel, anither qucer side look, "the purpose of the offisher making the inspection, was to see that they laid out their pay-money conform to military regulation; and no to filling their stamicks, and ruining baith soul and body, by throwing it away on whisky, as but ower mony, that aiblins should hae kent better, have dune but ower aften."

"'Tis but too true," said I till him; "but the best will fa' intil a faut sometimes. We have a' our failings, Thomas."

"Just so," answered Thomas; "but where was I at? Ou, about the whisky. Weel, speaking about the whisky: ye see, the offisher, Lovetenant Todrick, I b'lief they called him, had made an observe about Duncan's kettle; so, when he cam to him, Duncan was sitting in the lown side of a dyke, with his red nose, and a pipe in his cheek, on a big stane, glowering frae him anither way; and, as I was saying, when he cam to him he said, 'Weel, Duncan MacAlpine, what have ye in your kettle the day, man?'

"And Duncan, rinning down his lang fork, answered in his ain Highland brogue way—'Please your honour, just my auld fav'rite, tripe.'

"Deed, Duncan," said Lovetenant Todrick, or whatever they ca'd him, "it is an auld fav'rite, surely, for I have never seen ye have onything else for your denner, man."

"Every man to his taste, please your honour," answered Duncan MacAlpine; "let ilka ane please her nainsel,"—hauling up a screed half a yard lang; "ilka man to his taste, please your honour, Lovetenant Todrick."

"'Od, man," said I to him; "'od, man, ye're a deacon at telling a story.

Ye're a queer hand. Weel, what cam next?"

"What think ye should come next?" quo' Thomas, drily.

"I'm sure I dinna ken," answered I.

"Weel," said he, "I'll tell; but where was I at?"

"Ou, at the observe of Lovetenant Todrick, or what they ca'ed him, about the tripe; and the answer of Duncan MacAlpine on that head, that 'ilka man had his ain taste.'"

"'Vera true,' said Lovetenant Todrick; 'but lift it out a'thegither on that dish, till I get my specs on; for never since I was born, did I ever see before boiled tripe with buttons and button-holes intil't.'"

At this I set up a loud laughing, which I couldna help, though it was like to split my sides; but Thomas Burlings bade me whisht till I heard him out.

"'Buttons and button-holes!' quo' Duncan MacAlpine. 'Look again, wi' yer specs; for ye're surely wrang, Lovetenant Todrick.'"

"'Buttons and button-holes! and'deed I am surely right, Duncan,' answered Lovetenant Todrick, taking his specs deliberately aff the brig o' his nose, and faulding them thegither, as he put them, first into his morocco case, and syne into his pocket. 'Howsomever, Duncan MacAlpine, I'll pass ye ower for this time, gif ye take my warning, and for the future ware yer paymoney on wholesome butcher's meat, like a Christian, and no be trying to delude your ain stamick, and your offisher's een, by haddin' up, on a fork, such a heathenish make-up for a dish, as the leg of a pair o' buckskin breeches!'"

"Buckskin breeches!" said I; "and did he really and actually boil siccan trash to his dinner?"

"Nae sae far south as that yet, friend," answered Thomas. "Duncan wasna sae bowed in the intellect as ye imagine, and had some spice of cleverality about his queer manœuvres.—Eat siccan trash to his dinner! Nae mair, Mansie, than ye intend to eat that iron guse ye're rinning alang that piece claith; but he wantit to make his offishers believe that his pay gaed the right way—like the Pharisees of old that keepit praying, in ell-lang faces, about the corners of the streets, and gaed hame wi' hearts full of wickedness and a' manner of cheatrie."

"And what way did his pay gang then?" askit I; "and hoo did he live?"

"I telled ye before, frien," answered Thomas, "that he was a deboshed creature; and, like ower mony in the warld, likit weel what didna do him ony good. It's a wearyfu' thing that whisky. I wish it could be banished to Botany Bay."

"It is that," said I. "Muckle and nae little sin does it breed and produce in this world."

"I'm glad," quo' Thomas, stroking down his chin in a slee way. "I'm glad the guilty should see the folly o' their ain ways: it's the first step, ye ken, till amendment;—and indeed I tell't Maister Wiggie, when he sent me here, that I could almost become gude for yer being mair wary o' yer conduct for the future time to come."

This was like a thunder-clap to me, and I didna ken, for a jiffy, what to feel, think, or do, mair than perceiving that it was a piece of devilish cruelty on their pairts, taking things on this strict. As for myself, I could freely take sacred oath on the Book, that I hadna had a dram in my head for four months before; the knowledge of which made my corruption rise like lightning, as a man is aye brave when he is innocent; so, giein' my pow a bit scart, I said briskly, "So ye're after some session business in this veesit, are ye?"

"Ye've just guessed it," answered Thomas Burlings, sleeking down his front hair with his fingers, in a sober

way; "we had a meeting this forenoon; and it was resolved ye should stand a public rebuke in the meeting-house, on Sunday next."

"Hang me, if I do!" answered I, thumping my nieve down with all my might on the counter, and throwing back my cowl behind me, into a corner.

"No, man!" added I, snapping with great pith my finger and thumb in Thomas's een; "no for all the ministers and elders that ever were cleckit. They may do their best; and ye may tell them sae if ye like. I was born a free man; I live in a free country; I am the subject of a free king and constitution; and I'll be shot before I submit to such rank diabolical papistry."

"Hooly and fairly," quo' Thomas, staring a wee astonished like, and not a little surprised to see my birse up in this manner; for, when he thought upon shearing a lamb, he fund he had catched a tartar; so, calming down as fast as ye like, he said—"Hooly and fairly, Mansie" (or Maister Wauch, I believe, he did me the honour to ca' me), "they'll maybe no be sae hard as they threaten. But ye ken, my friend, I'm speaking to ye as a brither; it was an unco-like business for an elder, not only to gang till a play, which is ane of the deevil's rendezvouses, but to gang there in a state of liquor; making yoursel a warld's wonder—and you an elder of our kirk!—I put the question to yourself soberly?"

His threatening I could despise, and could have fought, cuffed, and kickit, wi' a' the ministers and elders of the General Assembly, to say naething of the Relief Synod, and the Burgher Union, before I wad demeaned mysel to yield to what my inward speerit plainly telled me to be rank cruelty and injustice; but ah! his calm, britherly, flattering way I couldna thole wi', and the tears came rapping into my een faster than it cared my manhood to let be seen; so I said till him, "Weel, weel, Thomas, I ken I have dune wrang; and I am sorry for't—they'll never find me in siccan a scrape again."

Thomas Burlings then cam forrit in a friendly way, and shook hands wi' me; telling that he wad go back and plead afore them in my behalf. He said this ower again, as we pairted, at my shop door; and, to do him justice, surely he hadna been waur than his word, for I have aye attended the kirk as usual, standing, whan it came to my rotation, at the plate, and naebody, gentle nor semple, ever spoke to me on the subject of the playhouse, or minted the matter of the rebuke from that day to this.

ELPHIN IRVING, THE FAIRIES' CUPBEARER.

By Allan Cunningham.

Chapter I.

The romantic vale of Corriewater, in Annandale, is regarded by the inhabitants, a pastoral and unmingled people, as the last border refuge of those beautiful and capricious beings, the fairies. Many old people, yet living, imagine they have had intercourse of good words and good deeds with the "gude folk;" and continue to tell that in the ancient days the fairies danced on the hill, and

revelled in the glen, and showed themselves, like the mysterious children of the Deity of old, among the sons and daughters of men. Their visits to the earth were periods of joy and mirth to mankind, rather than of sorrow and apprehension. They played on musical instruments of wonderful sweetness and variety of note, spread unexpected feasts, the supernatural flavour of which overpowered on many occasions the religious scruples of the Presbyterian shepherds, performed wonderful deeds of horsemanship, and marched in midnight processions, when the sound of their elfin minstrelsy charmed youths and maidens into love for their persons and pursuits; and more than one family of Corriewater have the fame of augmenting the numbers of the elfin chivalry. Faces of friends and relatives, long since doomed to the battle trench, or the deep sea, have been recognised by those who dared to gaze on the fairy march. The maid has seen her lost lover, and the mother her stolen child; and the courage to plan and achieve their deliverance has been possessed by, at least, one border maiden. In the legends of the people of Corrievale, there is a singular mixture of elfin and human adventure, and the traditional story of the Cupbearer to the Queen of the Fairies appeals alike to our domestic feelings and imagination.

In one of the little green loops or bends, on the banks of Corriewater, mouldered walls, and a few stunted wild plum-trees and vagrant roses, still point out the site of a cottage and garden. A well of pure spring-water leaps out from an old tree-root before the door; and here the shepherds, shading themselves in summer from the influence of the sun, tell to their children the wild tale of Elphin Irving and his sister Phemie; and, singular as the story seems, it has gained full credence among the people where the scene is laid.

"I ken the tale and the place weel," interrupted an old woman, who, from the predominance of scarlet in her apparel, seemed to have been a follower of the camp; "I ken them weel, and the tale's as true as a bullet to its aim, and a spark to powder. Oh, bonnie Corriewater! a thousand times have I pu'ed gowans on its banks wi' ane that lies stiff and stark on a foreign shore in a bloody grave:" and sobbing audibly, she drew the remains of a military cloak over her face, and allowed the story to proceed.

When Elphin Irving and his sister Phemie were in their sixteenth year (for tradition says they were twins), their father was drowned in Corriewater, attempting to save his sheep from a sudden swell, to which all mountain streams are liable; and their mother, on the day of her husband's burial, laid down her head on the pillow, from which, on the seventh day, it was lifted to be dressed for the same grave. The inheritance left to the orphans may be briefly described: seventeen acres of plough and pasture land, seven milk cows, and seven pet sheep (many old people take delight in odd numbers); and to this may be added seven bonnet pieces of Scottish gold, and a broadsword and spear, which their ancestor had wielded with such strength and courage in the battle of Dryfe-sands, that the minstrel who sang of that deed of arms ranked him only second to the Scotts and the Johnstones.

The youth and his sister grew in stature and in beauty. The brent bright brow, the clear blue eye, and frank and blithe deportment of the former, gave him some influence among the young women of the valley; while the latter was no less the admiration of the young men, and at fair and dance, and at bridal, happy was he who touched but her hand, or received the benediction of her eye. Like all other Scottish beauties, she was the theme of many a song; and while tradition is yet busy

with the singular history of her brother, song has taken all the care that rustic minstrelsy can of the gentleness of her spirit, and the charms of her person.

"Now I vow," exclaimed a wandering piper, "by mine own honoured instrument, and by all other instruments that ever yielded music for the joy and delight of mankind, that there are more bonnie songs made about fair Phemie Irving than about all the other maidens of Annandale, and many of them are both high and bonnie. A proud lass maun she be, if her spirit hears; and men say the dust lies not insensible of beautiful verse; for her charms are breathed through a thousand sweet lips, and no farther gone than yestermorn, I heard a lass singing on a green hillside what I shall not readily forget. If ye like to listen, ye shall judge; and it will not stay the story long nor mar it much, for it is short, and about Phemie Irving." And accordingly he chanted the following rude verses, not unaccompanied by his honoured instrument, as he called his pipe, which chimed in with great effect, and gave richness to a voice which felt better than it could express:—

FAIR PHEMIE IRVING.

I.

Gay is thy glen, Corrie,
With all thy groves flowering:
Green is thy glen, Corrie,
When July is showering;
And sweet is yon wood, where
The small birds are bowering,
And there dwells the sweet one
Whom I am adoring.

II.

Her round neck is whiter
Than winter when snowing;
Her meek voice is milder
Than Ae in its flowing;
The glad ground yields music
Where she goes by the river;
One kind glance would charm me
For ever and ever.

III.

The proud and the wealthy
To Phemie are bowing;
No looks of love win they
With sighing or suing;
Far away maun I stand
With my rude wooing,
She's a flow'ret too lovely
To bloom for my pu'ing—

IV.

O were I yon violet
On which she is walking;
O were I yon small bird
To which she is talking;
Or yon rose in her hand,
With its ripe ruddy blossom;
Or some pure gentle thought,
To be blest with her bosom!

This minstrel interruption, while it established Phemie Irving's claim to grace and to beauty, gave me additional confidence to pursue the story.

But minstrel skill and true love tale seemed to want their usual influence, when they sought to win her attention; she was only observed to pay most respect to those youths who were most beloved by her brother; and the same hour that brought these twins to the world, seemed to have breathed through them a sweetness and an affection of heart and mind, which nothing could divide. If, like the virgin queen of the immortal poet, she walked "in maiden meditation fancy free," her brother Elphin seemed alike untouched with the charms of the fairest virgins in Corrie. He ploughed his field, he reaped his grain, he leaped, he ran and wrestled, and danced and sang, with more skill and life and grace than all other youths of the district; but he had no twilight and stolen interviews. When all other young men had their loves by their side, he was single, though not unsought; and his joy seemed never perfect save when his sister was near him. If he loved to share his time with her, she loved to share her time with him alone, or with the beasts of the field, or the birds of the air. She watched her little flock late, and she tended it early; not for the sordid love of the fleece, unless it was to make mantles for her brother, but with the look of one who had joy in its company.

The very wild creatures, the deer and the hares, seldom sought to shun her approach, and the bird forsook not its nest, nor stinted its song, when she drew nigh; such is the confidence which maiden innocence and beauty inspire.

It happened one summer, about three years after they became orphans, that rain had been for a while withheld from the earth; the hillsides began to parch, the grass in the vales to wither, and the stream of Corrie was diminished between its banks to the size of an ordinary rill. The shepherds drove their flocks to moorlands, and marsh and tarn had their reeds invaded by the scythe, to supply the cattle with food. The sheep of his sister were Elphin's constant care; he drove them to the moistest pastures during the day, and he often watched them at midnight, when flocks, tempted by the sweet dewy grass, are known to browse eagerly, that he might guard them from the fox, and lead them to the choicest herbage. In these nocturnal watchings he sometimes drove his little flock over the water of Corrie, for the fords were hardly ankle-deep; or permitted his sheep to cool themselves in the stream, and taste the grass which grew along the brink. All this time not a drop of rain fell, nor did a cloud appear in the sky.

One evening during her brother's absence with the flock, Phemie sat at her cottage door, listening to the bleatings of the distant folds, and the lessened murmur of the water of Corrie, now scarcely audible beyond its banks. Her eyes, weary with watching along the accustomed line of road for the return of Elphin, were turned on the pool beside her, in which the stars were glimmering fitful and faint. As she looked, she imagined the water grew brighter and brighter; a wild illumination presently shone upon the pool, and leaped from bank to bank, and, suddenly changing into a human form, ascended the margin, and passing her, glided swiftly into the cottage. The visionary form was so like her brother in shape and air, that, starting up, she flew into the house, with the hope of finding him in his customary seat. She found him not; and impressed with the terror which a wraith or apparition seldom fails to inspire, she uttered a shriek so loud and so piercing as to be heard at Johnstonebank, on the other side of the vale of Corrie.

An old woman now rose suddenly from her seat in the window-sill, the living dread of shepherds, for she travelled the country with a brilliant reputation for witchcraft, and thus she broke in upon the narrative: "I vow, young man, ye tell us the truth upset and downthrust; I heard my douce grandmother say that on the night when Elphin Irving, disappeared—disappeared, I shall call it, for the bairn can but be gone for a season, to return to us in his own appointed time,—she was seated at the fireside at Johnstonebank; the laird had laid aside his bonnet to take the Book, when a shriek mair loud, believe me, than a mere woman's shriek,—and they can shriek loud enough, else they're sair wranged,—came over the water of Corrie, so sharp and shrilling, that the pewter plates dinnelled on the wall; such a shriek, my douce grandmother said, as rang in her ear till the hour of her death, and she lived till she was aughty and aught, forty full ripe years, after the event. But there is another matter, which, doubtless, I cannot compel ye to believe; it was the common rumour that Elphin Irving came not into the world like the other sinful creatures of the earth, but was one of the Kane-bairns 'of the fairies, whilk they had to pay to the enemy of man's salvation every seventh year. The poor lady-fairy,—a mother's aye a mother, be she elf's flesh or Eve's flesh,—hid her elf son beside the christened flesh in Marion Irving's cradle, and the auld enemy lost his prey for a time. Now hasten on with your story, which is not

a bodle the waur for me. The maiden saw the shape of her brother, fell into a faint or a trance, and the neighbours came flocking in. Gang on wi' your tale, young man, and dinna be affronted because an auld woman helped ye wi' it."

It is hardly known, I resumed, how long Phemie Irving continued in a state of insensibility. The morning was far advanced, when a neighbouring maiden found her seated in an old chair, as white as monumental marble; her hair, about which she had always been solicitous, loosened from its curls, and hanging disordered over her neck and bosom, her hands and forehead. The maiden touched the one and kissed the other; they were as cold as snow; and her eyes, wide open, were fixed on her brother's empty chair, with the intensity of gaze of one who had witnessed the appearance of a spirit. She seemed insensible of any one's presence, and sat fixed, and still, and motionless. The maiden, alarmed at her looks, thus addressed her: "Phemie, lass, Phemie Irving! Dear me, but this is awful! I have come to tell ye that seven o' yer pet sheep have escaped drowning in the water; for Corrie, sae quiet and sae gentle yestreen, is rolling and dashing frae bank to bank this morning. Dear me, woman, dinna let the loss o' the world's gear bereave ye of your senses. I would rather make ye a present of a dozen mug-ewes of the Tinwald brood mysel; and now I think on't, if ye'll send ower Elphin, I will help him hame with them in the gloaming mysel. So Phemie, woman, be comforted."

At the mention of her brother's name, she cried out, "Where is he? oh, where is he?"—gazed wildly round, and, shuddering from head to foot, fell senseless on the floor. Other inhabitants of the valley, alarmed by the sudden swell of the river, which had augmented to a torrent deep and impassable, now came in to inquire if any loss had been sustained, for numbers of sheep and teds of hay had been observed floating down about the dawn of the morning. They assisted in reclaiming the unhappy maiden from her swoon; but insensibility was joy compared to the sorrow to which she awakened.

"They have ta'en him away, they have ta'en him away;" she chanted in a tone of delirious pathos; "him that was whiter and fairer than the lily on Lyddal-lee. They have long sought, and they have long sued, and they had the power to prevail against my prayers at last. They have ta'en him away; the flower is plucked from among the weeds, and the dove is slain amid a flock of ravens. They came with shout, and they came with song, and they spread the charm, and they placed the spell, and the baptised brow has been bowed down to the unbaptised hand. They have ta'en him away, they have ta'en him away; he was too lovely, and too good, and too noble, to bless us with his continuance on earth; for what are the sons of men compared to him? —the light of the moonbeam to the morning sun; the glow-worm to the eastern star. They have ta'en him away, the invisible dwellers of the earth. I saw them come on him, with shouting and with singing, and they charmed him where he sat, and away they bore him; and the horse he rode was never shod with iron, nor owned before the mastery of human hand. They have ta'en him away, over the water, and over the wood, and over the hill. I got but ae look o' his bonnie blue ee, but ae look. But as I have endured what never maiden endured, so will I undertake what never maiden undertook,—I will win him from them all. I know the invisible ones of the earth; I have heard their wild and wondrous music in the wild woods, and there shall a christened maiden seek him and achieve his deliverance."

She paused, and glancing round a

circle of condoling faces, down which the tears were dropping like rain, said, in a calm, but still delirious tone,—

"Why do you weep, Mary Halliday? and why do you weep, John Graeme? Ye think that Elphin Irving,—oh, it's a bonnie, bonnie name, and dear to many a maiden's heart as well as mine, —ye think that he is drowned in Corrie, and ye will seek in the deep, deep pools for the bonnie, bonnie corse, that ye may weep over it, as it lies in its last linen, and lay it, amid weeping and wailing, in the dowie kirkyard. Ye may seek, but ye shall never find; so leave me to trim up my hair, and prepare my dwelling, and make myself ready to watch for the hour of his return to upper earth."

And she resumed her household labours with an alacrity which lessened not the sorrow of her friends.

Chapter II.

Meanwhile, the rumour flew over the vale that Elphin Irving was drowned in Corriewater. Matron and maid, old man and young, collected suddenly along the banks of the river, which now began to subside to its natural summer limits, and commenced their search; interrupted every now and then by calling from side to side, and from pool to pool, and by exclamations of sorrow for this misfortune. The search was fruitless: five sheep, pertaining to the flock which he conducted to pasture, were found drowned in one of the deep eddies; but the river was still too brown, from the soil of its moorland sources, to enable them to see what its deep shelves, its pools, and its overhanging and hazelly banks concealed. They remitted further search till the stream should become pure; and old man taking old man aside, began to whisper about the mystery of the youth's disappearance: old women laid their lips to the ears of their coevals, and talked of Elphin Irving's fairy parentage, and his having been dropped by an unearthly hand into a Christian cradle. The young men and maids conversed on other themes; they grieved for the loss of the friend and the lover, and while the former thought that a heart so kind and true was not left in the vale, the latter thought, as maidens will, on his handsome person, gentle manners, and merry blue eye, and speculated with a sigh on the time when they might have hoped a return for their love. They were soon joined by others who had heard the wild and delirious language of his sister: the old belief was added to the new assurance, and both again commented upon by minds full of superstitious feeling, and hearts full of supernatural fears, till the youths and maidens of Corrievale held no more love trysts for seven days and nights, lest, like Elphin Irving, they should be carried away to augment the ranks of the unchristened chivalry.

It was curious to listen to the speculations of the peasantry. "For my part," said a youth, "if I were sure that poor Elphin escaped from that perilous water, I would not give the fairies a pound of hiplock wool for their chance of him. There has not been a fairy seen in the land since Donald Cargill, the Cameronian, conjured them into the Solway for playing on their pipes during one of his nocturnal preachings on the hip of the Burnswark hill."

"Preserve me, bairn," said an old woman, justly exasperated at the incredulity of her nephew, "if ye winna believe what I both heard and saw at the moonlight end of Craigyburnwood on a summer night, rank after rank of the fairy folk, ye'll at least believe a douce man and a ghostly professor, even

the late minister of Tinwaldkirk; his only son (I mind the lad weel, with his long yellow locks and his bonnie blue eyes, when I was but a gilpie of a lassie), *he* was stolen away from off the horse at his father's elbow, as they crossed that false and fearsome water, even Locherbriggflow, on the night of the Midsummer Fair of Dumfries. Ay, ay, who can doubt the truth of that? Have not the godly inhabitants of Almsfield-town and Timwaldkirk seen the sweet youth riding at midnight, in the midst of the unhallowed troop, to the sound of flute and of dulcimer; and though meikle they prayed, naebody tried to achieve his deliverance?"

"I have heard it said, by douce folk and sponsible," interrupted another, "that every seven years the elves and fairies pay kane, or make an offering of one of their children to the grand enemy of salvation, and that they are permitted to purloin one of the children of men to present to the fiend; a more acceptable offering, I'll warrant, than one of their own infernal brood, that are Satan's sib allies, and drink a drop of the deil's blood every May morning. And touching this lost lad, ye all ken his mother was a hawk of an uncannie nest, a second cousin of Kate Kimmer, of Barfloshan, as rank a witch as ever rode on ragwort. Ay, sirs, what's bred in the bone is ill to come out o' the flesh."

On these and similar topics, which a peasantry full of ancient tradition and enthusiasm and superstition, readily associate with the commonest occurrences of life, the people of Corrievale continued to converse till the fall of evening; when each seeking their home, renewed again the wondrous subject, and illustrated it with all that popular belief and poetic imagination could so abundantly supply.

The night which followed this melancholy day was wild with wind and rain; the river came down broader and deeper than before, and the lightning, flashing by fits over the green woods of Corrie, showed the ungovernable and perilous flood sweeping above its banks. It happened that a farmer, returning from one of the border fairs, encountered the full swing of the storm; but, mounted on an excellent horse, and mantled from chin to heel in a good gray plaid, beneath which he had the farther security of a thick great-coat, he sat dry in his saddle, and proceeded in the anticipated joy of a subsided tempest, and a glowing morning sun. As he entered the long grove, or rather remains of the old Galwegian forest, which lines for some space the banks of the Corriewater, the storm began to abate, the wind sighed milder and milder among the trees; and here and there a star, twinkling momentarily through the sudden rack of the clouds, showed the river raging from bank to brae. As he shook the moisture from his clothes, he was not without a wish that the day would dawn, and that he might be preserved on a road which his imagination beset with greater perils than the raging river; for his superstitious feeling let loose upon his path elf and goblin, and the current traditions of the district supplied very largely to his apprehension the ready materials of fear.

Just as he emerged from the wood, where a fine sloping bank, covered with short green sward, skirts the limit of the forest, his horse made a full pause, snorted, trembled, and started from side to side, stooped his head, erected his ears, and seemed to scrutinize every tree and bush. The rider, too, it may be imagined, gazed round and round, and peered warily into every suspicious-looking place. His dread of a supernatural visitation was not much allayed, when he observed a female shape seated on the ground at the root of a huge old oak tree, which stood in the centre of one of those patches of verdant sward, known by the name of "fairy rings,"

and avoided by all peasants who wish to prosper. A long thin gleam of eastern daylight enabled him to examine accurately the being who, in this wild place and unusual hour, gave additional terror to this haunted spot. She was dressed in white from the neck to the knees; her arms, long, and round, and white, were perfectly bare; her head, uncovered, allowed her long hair to descend in ringlet succeeding ringlet, till the half of her person was nearly concealed in the fleece. Amidst the whole, her hands were constantly busy in shedding aside the tresses which interposed between her steady and uninterrupted gaze, down a line of old road which winded among the hills to an ancient burial-ground.

As the traveller continued to gaze, the figure suddenly rose, and wringing the rain from her long locks, paced round and round the tree, chanting in a wild and melancholy manner an equally wild and delirious song:—

THE FAIRY OAK OF CORRIEWATER.

I.

The small bird's head is under its wing,
The deer sleeps on the grass;
The moon comes out, and the stars shine down,
The dew gleams like the glass:
There is no sound in the world so wide,
Save the sound of the smitten brass,
With the merry cittern and the pipe
Of the fairies as they pass.—
But oh! the fire maun burn and burn,
And the hour is gone, and will never return.

II.

The green hill cleaves, and forth, with a bound,
Come elf and elfin steed;
The moon dives down in a golden cloud,
The stars grow dim with dread;
But a light is running along the earth,
So of heaven's they have no need:
O'er moor and moss with a shout they pass,
And the word is, spur and speed.—
But the fire maun burn, and I maun quake,
And the hour is gone that will never come back.

And when they come to Craigyburn wood,
The Queen of the Fairies spoke:—
"Come, bind your steeds to the rushes so green,
And dance by the haunted oak:
I found the acorn on Heshbon-hill,
In the nook of a palmer's poke,
A thousand years since; here it grows!"
And they danced till the greenwood shook.—
But oh! the fire, the burning fire,
The longer it burns, it but blazes the higher.

IV.

"I have won me a youth," the Elf-queen said,
"The fairest that earth may see;
This night I have won young Elph Irving,
My cupbearer to be.
His service lasts but for seven sweet years,
And his wage is a kiss of me."
And merrily, merrily laughed the wild elves,
Round Corrie's greenwood tree.—
But oh! the fire it glows in my brain,
And the hour is gone, and comes not again.

V.

The Queen she has whispered a secret word,
"Come hither, my Elphin sweet,
And bring that cup of the charmèd wine,
Thy lips and mine to weet."
But a brown elf shouted a loud, loud shout,
"Come, leap on your coursers fleet,
For here comes the smell of some baptized flesh,
And the sounding of baptized feet."—
But oh! the fire that burns, and maun burn;
For the time that is gone will never return.

VI.

On a steed as white as the new-milked milk,
The Elf-queen leaped with a bound,
And young Elphin a steed like December snow
'Neath him at the word he found.
But a maiden came, and her christened arms
She linked her brother around,
And called on God, and the steed with a snort
Sank into the gaping ground.—
But the fire maun burn, and I maun quake,
And the time that is gone will no more come back.

VII.

And she held her brother, and lo! he grew
A wild bull waked in ire;
And she held her brother, and lo! he changed
To a river roaring higher;
And she held her brother, and he became
A flood of the raging fire;
She shrieked and sank, and the wild elves laughed,
Till mountain rang and mire.—
But oh! the fire yet burns in my brain,
And the hour is gone, and comes not again.

VIII.

"Oh, maiden, why waxed thy faith so faint,
Thy spirit so slack and slaw?
Thy courage kept good till the flame waxed wud,
Then thy might began to thaw,

Had ye kissed him with thy christened lip,
Ye had won him frae 'mang us a'.
Now bless the fire, the elfin fire,
That made thee faint and fa';
Now bless the fire, the elfin fire,
The longer it burns it blazes the higher."

At the close of this unusual strain, the figure sat down on the grass, and proceeded to bind up her long and disordered tresses, gazing along the old and unfrequented road.

"Now God be my helper," said the traveller, who happened to be the Laird of Johnstonebank, "can this be a trick of the fiend, or can it be bonnie Phemie Irving, who chants this dolorous song? Something sad has befallen, that makes her seek her seat in this eerie nook amid the darkness and tempest: through might from abune, I will go on and see."

And the horse, feeling something of the owner's reviving spirit in the application of the spur-steel, bore him at once to the foot of the tree. The poor delirious maiden uttered a piercing yell of joy as she beheld him, and, with the swiftness of a creature winged, linked her arms round the rider's waist, and shrieked till the woods rang.

"Oh, I have ye now, Elphin, I have ye now!" and she strained him to her bosom with a convulsive grasp.

"What ails ye, my bonnie lass?" said the Laird of Johnstonebank, his fears of the supernatural vanishing when he beheld her sad and bewildered look.

She raised her eyes at the sound, and, seeing a strange face, her arms slipped their hold, and she dropped with a groan on the ground.

The morning had now fairly broken: the flocks shook the rain from their sides, the shepherds hastened to inspect their charges, and a thin blue smoke began to stream from the cottages of the valley into the brightening air. The laird carried Phemie Irving in his arms, till he observed two shepherds ascending from one of the loops of Corriewater, bearing the lifeless body of her brother. They had found him whirling round and round in one of the numerous eddies, and his hands, clutched and filled with wool, showed that he had lost his life in attempting to save the flock of his sister.

A plaid was laid over the body, which, along with the unhappy maiden in a half lifeless state, was carried into a cottage, and laid in that apartment distinguished among the peasantry by the name of "the chamber." While the peasant's wife was left to take care of Phemie, old man, and matron, and maid had collected around the drowned youth, and each began to relate the circumstances of his death, when the door suddenly opened, and his sister, advancing to the corpse with a look of delirious serenity, broke out into a wild laugh, and said,—

"O, it is wonderful, it's truly wonderful! that bare and death-cold body, dragged from the darkest pool of Corrie, with its hands filled with fine wool, wears the perfect similitude of my own Elphin! I'll teli ye—the spiritual dwellers of the earth, the fairyfolk of our evening tale, have stolen the living body, and fashioned this cold and inanimate clod to mislead your pursuit. In common eyes, this seems all that Elphin Irving would be, had he sunk in Corriewater; but so it seems not to me. Ye have sought the living soul, and ye have found only its garment. But oh, if ye had beheld him, as I beheld him to-night, riding among the elfin troop, the fairest of them all; had you clasped him in your arms, and wrestled for him with spirits and terrible shapes from the other world, till your heart quailed and your flesh was subdued, then would ye yield no credit to the semblance which this cold and apparent flesh bears to my brother. But hearken—on Hallowe'en, when the spiritual people are let loose on earth for a season, I will take my stand in the burial-ground of Corrie; and when my Elphin and his unchristened

troop come past with the sound of all their minstrelsy, I will leap on him and win him, or perish for ever."

All gazed aghast on the delirious maiden, and many of her auditors gave more credence to her distempered speech than to the visible evidence before them. As she turned to depart, she looked round, and suddenly sunk upon the body, with tears streaming from her eyes, and sobbed out, "My brother! oh, my brother!" She was carried out insensible, and again recovered; but relapsed into her ordinary delirium, in which she continued till the Hallow-eve after her brother's burial.

She was found seated in the ancient burial-ground, her back against a broken grave-stone, her locks white with frost-rime, watching with intensity of look the road to the kirk-yard; but the spirit which gave life to the fairest form of all the maids of Annandale was fled for ever.

Such is the singular story which the peasants know by the name of Elphin Irving, the Fairies' Cupbearer; and the title, in its fullest and most supernatural sense, still obtains credence among the industrious and virtuous dalesmen of the romantic vale of Corrie.

CHOOSING A MINISTER.

By John Galt.

The Rev. Dr Swapkirk having had an apoplexy, the magistrates were obligated to get Mr Pittle to be his helper. Whether it was that, by our being used to Mr Pittle, we had ceased to have a right respect for his parts and talents, or that in reality he was but a weak brother, I cannot in conscience take it on me to say; but the certainty is, that when the Doctor departed this life, there was hardly one of the hearers who thought Mr Pittle would ever be their placed minister, and it was as far at first from the unanimous mind of the magistrates, who are the patrons of the parish, as anything could well be, for he was a man of no smeddum in discourse. In verity, as Mrs Pawkie, my wife, said, his sermons in the warm summer afternoons were just a perfect hushabaa, that no mortal could hearken to without sleeping. Moreover, he had a sorning way with him, that the genteeler sort couldna abide, for he was for ever going from house to house about tea-time, to save his ain canister. As for the young ladies, they couldna endure him at all, for he had aye the sough and sound of love in his mouth, and a round-about ceremonial of joking concerning the same, that was just a fasheric to them to hear. The commonality, however, were his greatest adversaries; for he was, notwithstanding the spareness of his abilities, a prideful creature, taking no interest in their hamely affairs, and seldom visiting the aged or the sick among them.

Shortly, however, before the death of the Doctor, Mr Pittle had been very attentive to my wife's full cousin, Miss Lizzie Pinkie,—I'll no say on account of the legacy of seven hundred pounds left her by an uncle, that made his money in foreign parts, and died at Portsmouth of the liver complaint, when he was coming home to enjoy himself; and Mrs Pawkie told me, that as soon as Mr Pittle could get a kirk, I needna be surprised if I heard o' a marriage between him and Miss Lizzie.

Had I been a sordid and interested man, this news could never have given me the satisfaction it did, for Miss Lizzie was very fond of my bairns, and it was thought that Peter would have been her heir; but so far from being concerned at what I heard, I rejoiced thereat, and resolved in secret thought, whenever a vacancy happened (Dr Swapkirk being then fast wearing away), to exert the best of my ability to get the kirk for Mr Pittle,—not, however, unless he was previously married to Miss Lizzie; for, to speak out, she was beginning to stand in need of a protector, and both me and Mrs Pawkie had our fears that she might outlive her income, and in her old age become a cess upon us. And it couldna be said that this was any groundless fear; for Miss Lizzie, living a lonely maiden life by herself, with only a bit lassie to run her errands, and no being naturally of an active or eydent turn, aften wearied, and to keep up her spirits, gaed, maybe, now and then, oftener to the gardevin than was just necessar, by which, as we thought, she had a tavert look. Howsoever, as Mr Pittle had taken a notion of her, and she pleased his fancy, it was far from our hand to misliken one that was sib to us; on the contrary, it was a duty laid on me by the ties of blood and relationship to do all in my power to further their mutual affection into matrimonial fruition; and what I did towards that end is the burden of this narrative.

Dr Swapkirk, in whom the spark of life was long fading, closed his eyes, and it went utterly out, as to this world, on a Saturday night, between the hours of eleven and twelve. We had that afternoon got an inkling that he was drawing near to his end. At the latest, Mrs Pawkie herself went over to the manse, and stayed till she saw him die. "It was a pleasant end," she said, for he was a godly, patient man; and we were both sorely grieved, though it was a thing for which we had been long prepared, and, indeed, to his family and connections, except for the loss of the stipend, it was a very gentle dispensation, for he had been long a heavy handful, having been for years but, as it were, a breathing lump of mortality, groosy and oozy, and doozy, his faculties being shut up and locked in by a dumb palsy.

Having had this early intimation of the Doctor's removal to a better world, on the Sabbath morning when I went to join the magistrates in the council-chamber, as the usage is, to go to the laft, with the town-officers carrying their halberts before us, according to the ancient custom of all royal burghs, my mind was in a degree prepared to speak to them anent the successor. Little, however, passed at that time, and it so happened that, by some wonder of inspiration (there were, however, folk that said it was taken out of a book of sermons, by one Barrow, an English divine), Mr Pittle that forenoon preached a discourse that made an impression, insomuch that, on our way back to the council-chamber, I said to Provost Vintner that then was—

"Really, Mr Pittle seems, if he would exert himself, to have a nerve. I could not have thought it was in the power of his capacity to have given us such a sermon."

The provost thought as I did; so I replied—

"We canna, I think, do better than keep him among us. It would, indeed, provost, no be doing justice to the young man to pass another over his head."

I could see that the provost wasna quite sure of what I had been saying; for he replied, that it was a matter that needed consideration.

When we separated at the council-chamber, I threw myself in the way of Bailie Weezle, and walked home with him, our talk being on the subject of the vacancy; and I rehearsed to him what had passed between me and the provost, saying, that the provost had

made no objection to prefer Mr Pittle, which was the truth.

Bailie Weezle was a man no overladen with worldly wisdom, and had been chosen into the council principally on account of being easily managed. In his business, he was originally by trade a baker in Glasgow, where he made a little money, and came to settle among us with his wife, who was a native of the town, and had her relations here. Being, therefore, an idle man, living on his money, and of a soft and quiet nature, he was, for the reason aforesaid, chosen into the council, where he always voted on the provost's side; for in controverted questions every one is beholden to take a part, and he thought it his duty to side with the chief magistrate.

Having convinced the bailie that Mr Pittle had already, as it were, a sort of infeoffment in the kirk, I called in the evening on my old predecessor in the guildry, Bailie M'Lucre, who was not a hand to be so easily dealt with; but I knew his inclinations, and therefore I resolved to go roundly to work with him. So I asked him out to take a walk, and I led him towards the town-moor, conversing loosely about one thing and another, and touching softly here and there on the vacancy.

When we were well on into the middle of the moor, I stopped, and, looking round me, said,—

"Bailie, surely it's a great neglec' of the magistrates and council to let this braw broad piece of land, so near the town, lie in a state o' nature, and giving pasturage to only twa-three of the poor folks' cows. I wonder you, that's now a rich man, and with een worth pearls and diamonds,—that ye dinna think of asking a tack of this land; ye might make a great thing o't."

The fish nibbled, and told me that he had for some time entertained a thought on the subject; but he was afraid that I would be over extortionate.

"I wonder to hear you, bailie," said I; "I trust and hope no one will ever find me out of the way of justice; and to convince you that I can do a friendly turn, I'll no objec' to gie you a' my influence free gratis, if ye'll gie Mr Pittle a lift into the kirk; for, to be plain with you, the worthy young man, who, as ye heard to-day, is no without an ability, has long been fond of Mrs Pawkie's cousin, Miss Lizzie Pinkie; and I would fain do all that lies in my power to help on the match.

The bailie was well pleased with my frankness, and before returning home, we came to a satisfactory understanding; so that the next thing I had to do was to see Mr Pittle himself on the subject, Accordingly, in the gloaming, I went over to where he stayed: it was with Miss Jenny Killfuddy, an elderly maiden lady, whose father was the minister of Braehill, and the same that is spoken of in the chronicle of Dalmailing, as having had his eye almost put out by a clash of glaur, at the stormy placing of Mr Balwhidder.

"Mr Pittle," said I, as soon as I was in, and the door closed, "I'm come to you as a friend. Both Mrs Pawkie and me have long discerned that ye have had a look more than common towards our friend Miss Lizzie, and we think it our duty to inquire your intents, before matters gang to greater length."

He looked a little dumfoundered at this salutation, and was at a loss for an answer; so I continued—

"If your designs be honourable, and no doubt they are, now's your time; —strike while the iron's hot. By the death of the Doctor, the kirk's vacant, the town-council have the patronage; and if ye marry Miss Lizzie, my interest and influence shall not be slack in helping you into the poopit."

In short, out of what passed that night, on the Monday following, Mr Pittle and Miss Lizzie were married; and by my dexterity, together with the able

help I had in Bailie M'Lucre, he was in due season placed and settled in the parish; and the next year, more than fifty acres of the town-moor were inclosed, on a nine hundred and ninety-nine years' tack, at an easy rate, between me and the bailie, he paying the half of the expense of the ditching and rooting out of the whins; and it was acknowledged, by every one that saw it, that there had not been a greater improvement for many years in all the country-side. But to the best actions there will be adverse and discontented spirits; and, on this occasion, there were not wanting persons naturally of a disloyal opposition temper, who complained of the inclosure as a usurpation of the rights and property of the poorer burghers. Such revilings, however, are what all persons in authority must suffer; and they had only the effect of making me button my coat, and look out the crooser to the blast.—"*The Provost.*"

THE MEAL MOB.

DURING the winter of 18—, there was a great scarcity of grain in the western districts of Scotland. The expediency of the corn laws was then hotly discussed, but the keen hunger of wives and children went further to embitter the spirits of the lower orders. The abstract question was grasped at as a vent for ill-humour, or despairingly, as a last chance for preservation. As usual, exaggerated reports were caught up and circulated by the hungry operatives, of immense prices demanded by grain-merchants and farmers, and of great stores of grain garnered up for exportation. As a natural consequence of all these circumstances, serious disturbances took place in more than one burgh.

The town of ——, in which I then resided, had hitherto been spared, but a riot was, in the temper of the poor, daily to be expected. Numbers of special constables were sworn in. The commander of the military party then in the barracks was warned to hold himself in readiness. Such members of the county yeomanry corps as resided in or near the town were requested to lend their aid, if need should be.

I was sitting comfortably by my fireside, one dark, cold evening, conversing with a friend over a tumbler of toddy, when we were both summoned to officiate in our capacity of constables. The poor fellows who fell at Waterloo sprang from their hard, curtainless beds with less reluctance. We lingered rather longer than decency allowed of, buttoning our greatcoats and adjusting our comforters. At last, casting a piteous look at the fire, which was just beginning to burn up gloriously, we pressed our hats deeper over our eyes, grasped our batons, and sallied forth.

The mischief had begun in the mills at the town-head, and as the parties employed in the mob went to work with less reluctance than we had done, the premises were fairly gutted, and the plunderers, (or, more properly speaking, devastators) on their way to another scene of action, before a sufficient *posse* of our body could be mustered. We encountered the horde coming down the main street. The advanced guard consisted of an immense swarm of little ragged boys, running scatteredly with stones in their hands and bonnets. These were flanked and followed by a number of dirty, draggle-tailed drabs, most of them with children in their arms. Upon them followed a dense mass of men of all ages, many of them in the garb of

sailors, for the tars had learned that the soldiery were likely to be employed against the people, and there is a standing feud between the "salt-waters" and the "lobsters." There was also a vague and ill-regulated sympathy for the suffering they saw around them, working at the bottom. All this array we half saw, half conjectured, by the dim light of the dirty street lamps. The body was silent, but for the incessant pattering of their feet as they moved along.

The word was given to clear the street, and we advanced with right ill-will upon them. The first ranks gave back, but there arose immediately a universal and deafening hooting, groaning, yelling, and whistling. The shrill and angry voices of women were heard above all, mingled with the wailing of their terrified babes. "We maun hae meat;" "Fell the gentle boutchers;" "Belay there! spank him with your pole;" resounded on every side, in the screaming tones of women, and the deep voices of sailors, garnished and enforced with oaths too dreadful to mention. Nor was this all: a shower of stones came whizzing past our ears from the boy-tirailleurs mentioned above, levelling some of our companions, jingling among the windows, and extinguishing the lamps. Some of the boldest of the men next attempted to wrest the batons from the constables who stood near them. In this they were assisted by the women, who crushed into our ranks, and prevented us giving our cudgels free play. The stones continued to fly in all directions, hitting the rioters as often as the preservers of the peace. The parties tugged and pulled at each other most stubbornly, while the screams of pain and anger, the yell of triumph, and hoarse execrations, waxed momentarily louder and more terrific.

At last the constables were driven back, with the loss of all their batons and most of their best men. The mob rushed onward with a triumphant hurrah, and turned down a side street leading to a granary, in which they believed a great quantity of grain was stored up. The proprietor's house stood beside it. A volley of stones was discharged against the latter, which shattered every window in the house, and the missiles were followed by a thunder-growl of maledictions, which made the hair of the innocent inmates stand on their heads, and their hearts die within them. The crowd stood irresolute for a moment. A tall athletic sailor advanced to the door of the granary. "Have you never a marlin-spike to bouse open the hatchway here?" A crowbar was handed to him. "A glim! a glim!" cried voices from different parts of the crowd. It was now for the first time discovered that some of the party had provided themselves with torches, for after a few minutes' fumbling a light was struck, and immediately the pitch brands cast a lurid light over the scene. The state of the corn merchant's family must now have been dreadful. The multitude stood hushed as death, or as the coming thunderstorm. All this time the sailor of whom I have spoken had been prising away with his bar at the granary door.

At this moment a heavy-measured tread was heard indistinctly in the distance. It drew nearer, and became more distinct. Some respectable burghers, who had assembled, and stood aloof gazing on the scene, now edged closer to the crowd, and addressed the nearest women in a low voice: "Yon's the sodgers." The hint was taken, for, one by one, the women gathered their infants closer in their arms, and dropped off. First one and then another pale-faced, consumptive-looking weaver followed their example in silence. The trampling now sounded close at hand, and its measured note was awful in the hush of the dark night. The panic now spread to the boys, who flew asunder

on all sides—like a parcel of carion flies when disturbed by a passenger—squalling, "Yon's the sodgers!" So effectual was the dispersion that ensued, that when the soldiers defiled into the wider space before the granary, no one remained except the door-breaker, and one or two of the torch-holders.

The latter threw down their brands and scampered. The lights were snatched up before they were extinguished, by some of the boldest constables. Of all the rioters only one remained—the tall sailor, who may be termed their ringleader. The foremost rank of the soldiers was nearly up to him, and others were defiling from behind to intercept him should he attempt to reach the side streets. He stood still, watchful as a wild beast when surrounded by hunters, but with an easy roll of his body, and a good-humoured smile upon his face. "Yield, Robert Jones," cried the provost, who feared he might meditate a desperate and unavailing resistance. But instead of answering, Robert sprung upon a soldier who was forming into line at his right side, struck up the man's musket, twisted off the bayonet, and making it shine through the air in the torchlight like a rocket, tripped up his heels. "Not yet, lobster!" he exclaimed, as the bayonet of the fallen hero's left-hand man glanced innocuously past him, so saying, the sailor rapidly disappeared down a dark lane.—*Edinburgh Literary Journal.*

THE FLITTING.

IT was on the day before the flitting, or removal, that John Armour's farm-stock, and indeed everything he had, excepting as much as might furnish a small cottage, was to be rouped to meet his debts. No doubt it was a heart-rending scene to all the family, though his wife considered all their losses light, when compared with her husband's peace of mind. The great bustle of the sale, however, denied him the leisure which a just view of his condition made most to be dreaded; so that it was not till late in the evening, when all was quiet again,—his cherished possessions removed, and time allowed him to brood over his state,—that the deep feelings of vexation and despair laid hold of his spirit.

The evening was one of remarkable beauty; the birds never more rapturous, the grass never greener around the farm-house. The turf seat on which old Hugh was wont to rest, in the corner of the little garden, was white with gowans; the willows and honeysuckles that overarched it all full of life; the air was bland, the cushat's distant cooing very plaintive;—all but the inhabitants of the humble dwelling was tranquil and delighted. But they were downcast; each one pursued some necessary preparation for to-morrow's great change, saying little, but deeply occupied with sad thoughts. Once the wife ejaculated—

"Oh, that the morn was ower!"

"Yes," said her husband, "the morn, and every morn o' them!—but I wish this gloaming had been stormy."

He could not settle—he could not eat—he avoided conversation; and, with his hat drawn over his brow, he traversed wearily the same paths, and did over and over again the same things. It was near bedtime, when one of the children said to her mother—

"My faither's stan'in' at the corner

o' the stable, and didna speak to me when I spak to him;—gang out, mother, and bring him in."

"If he wad but speak to me!" was the mother's answer. She went out,—the case had become extreme,—and she ventured to argue with and reprove him.

"Ye do wrang, John—this is no like yoursel;—the world's fu' of affliction—ithers ken that as weel as you—ye maunna hae a' things your ain way: there's Ane abune us wha has said, 'In sorrow shalt thou eat thy bread all the days of thy life.' Ye canna expect to gang free; and I maun say it wadna be gude for ony o' us. Maybe greater ills are yet to befa' ye, and then ye'll rue sair that ye hae gien way at this time; come in, John, wi' me; time will wear a' this out o' mind."

He struck his hand against his brow—he grasped at his neckcloth—and after choking on a few syllables which he could not utter, tears gushed from his eyes, and he melted in a long heart-rending fit of weeping. Oh, it is a sorrowful thing to see a strong hard-featured man shedding tears! His sobs are so heavy, his wail so full-toned! John Armour, perhaps for twenty years a stranger to weeping, had now to burst the sealed sluices of manhood's grief, which nothing but the resistless struggle of agony could accomplish, ere relief could reach his labouring breast. Now it was he sought the dearest sanctuary on earth—he leaned upon his wife's bosom, and she lavished on him the riches of a woman's love. At length he went to rest, gentler in spirit, and borne down by a less frightful woe than what had lately oppressed him.

Next morning brought round the bustle of flitting. There is a deep interest attending a scene of this kind, altogether separate from the feelings of those who have to leave a favourite abode. Circumstances of antiquity—of mystery—belong to it. The demolition even of an old house has something melancholy; the dismantling it of furniture is not less affecting. Some of the servants that had been at one time about the farm assisted on this occasion, and entered fully into the sentiments now described.

"That press has been there, I'll warran', this fifty years; it was his mother's, and cam on her blithe marriage-day; the like o't ye'll no see now-a-days—it's fresh yet. Few hae seen the back o' thee, I trow, these twa days, but the wabsters and sclaters; they winna ken what to mak o' this wark; let me look into the back o't."

"I wad be a wee eerie," said another, feeling the gloomy appearance of the old empty dwelling suggest thoughts allied to superstition, "about ganging into that toom house at night; I wad aye be thinkin' o' meeting wi' auld Hugh, honest man."

The flitting set off to a cottage about two miles distant; two cart loads of furniture, one milk cow, and the old watch-dog, were its amount. John Armour lingered a little behind, as did his wife, for she was unwilling to leave him there alone. He then proceeded to every part of the premises. The barn and stable kept him a few moments; the rest he hurried over, excepting the kitchen and spence. When he came to the kitchen (for it was the apartment he visited last), he leant his head for an instant against the mantelpiece, and fixed his eyes on the hearthstone. A deep sigh escaped him, and his wife then took him by the hand to lead him away, which he resisted not, only saying,—

"I hae mind o' mony a thing that happened here;"—then casting his eyes hastily round the desolate apartment,—"but fareweel to thee for ever!" In a few minutes they overtook the flitting, nor did he once turn again his head towards the desolate place which had so firm a hold of his heart.—"*My Grandfather's Farm.*"

EWEN OF THE LITTLE HEAD:

A LEGEND OF THE WESTERN ISLES.

ABOUT three hundred years ago, Ewen Maclean of Lochbuy, in the island of Mull, having been engaged in a quarrel with a neighbouring chief, a day was fixed for determining the affair by the sword. Lochbuy, before the day arrived, consulted a celebrated witch as to the result of the feud. The witch declared, that if Lochbuy's wife should on the morning of that day give him and his men food unasked, he would be victorious; but if not, the result would be the reverse. This was a disheartening response for the unhappy votary, his wife being a noted shrew.

The fatal morning arrived, and the hour for meeting the enemy approached; but there appeared no symptoms of refreshment for Lochbuy and his men. At length the unfortunate man was compelled to ask his wife to supply them with food. She set down before them curds, but without spoons. The men ate the curds as well as they could with their hands; but Lochbuy himself ate none. After behaving with the greatest bravery in the bloody conflict which ensued, he fell covered with wounds, leaving his wife to the execration of his people.

But the miseries brought on the luckless chief by his sordid and shrewish spouse did not end with his life, for he died fasting; and his ghost is frequently seen to this day riding the very horse on which he was mounted when he was killed. It was a small, but very neat and active pony, dun or mouse coloured, to which Lochbuy was much attached, and on which he had ridden for many years before his death. His appearance is as accurately described in the island of Mull as any steed is in Newmarket. The prints of his shoes are discerned by connoisseurs, and the rattling of his curb is recognized in the darkest night. He is not particular in regard to roads, for he goes up hill and down dale with equal velocity. His hard-fated rider still wears the same green cloak which covered him in his last battle; and he is particularly distinguished by the small size of his head.

It is now above three hundred years since Ewen-a-Chin-Vig (*Anglice*, "Hugh of the Little Head") fell in the field of honour; but neither the vigour of the horse nor of the rider is yet diminished. His mournful duty has always been to attend the dying moments of every member of his own numerous tribe, and to escort the departed spirit on its long and arduous journey.

Some years ago, he accosted one of his own people (indeed, he has never been known to notice any other), and shaking him cordially by the hand, he attempted to place him on the saddle behind himself, but the uncourteous dog declined the honour. Ewen struggled hard, but the clown was a great strong, clumsy fellow, and stuck to the earth with all his might. He candidly acknowledged, however, that his chief would have prevailed, had it not been for a birch tree which stood by, and which he got within the fold of his left arm. The contest became then very warm indeed. At length, however, Ewen lost his seat for the first time; and the instant the pony found he was his own master, he set off with the fleetness of lightning. Ewen immedietely pursued his steed, and the wearied rustic sped his way homeward.—*Lit. Gazette.*

BASIL ROLLAND.

CHAPTER I.

In May, quhen men yied everichone
With Robene Hoid and Littil John,
To bring in bowis and birken bobynis,
Now all sic game is fastlings gone,
Bot gif if be amangs clowin Robbynis.—*A. Scott.*

THE period at which the circumstances recorded in the following narrative happened was in the troubled year of 1639. At that time the points in dispute betwixt Charles and his subjects were most violently contested, and the partizans of each were in arms all over the country, endeavouring, by partial and solitary operations, to gain the ascendancy for their faction. The first cause of these disturbances was the attempt of the monarch to establish Episcopacy over Scotland—a form of worship which had always been disliked by the Scotch, as they considered it but a single step removed from Popery. The intemperate zeal with which Charles prosecuted his views (occasioned by a misconception of the national character of his subjects), and his averseness to compromise or conciliation, first gave rise to the combination called the Covenanters; weak at first, but in a short time too powerful to be shaken by the exertions of the High Churchmen.

One of the first and most politic steps taken by the Council of the Covenant, denominated "the Tables," was the framing of the celebrated Bond or Covenant; the subscribers of which bound themselves to resist the introduction of Popery and Prelacy, and to stand by each other in case of innovations on the established worship. Charles seeing, at last, the strength of this association, uttered, in his turn, a covenant renouncing Popery; he also dispensed with the use of the Prayer Book, the Five Articles of Perth, and other things connected with public worship which were obnoxious to the Covenanters.

During this contention, the citizens of Aberdeen remained firmly attached to the royal interest, and appear to have come in with every resolution that was adopted by the government. In 1638, a deputation from "the Tables," among whom was the celebrated Andrew Cant (from whom the mission was denominated "Cant's Visitation"), arrived in the town, for the purpose of inducing the inhabitants to subscribe the Covenant; but as their representations entirely failed of success, they were obliged to desist. The Earl of Montrose arrived in Aberdeen in the spring of 1639, and, partly by the terror of his arms, partly by the representations of the clergy that accompanied him, succeeded in imposing the Covenant on the townsmen. After his departure, a body of the royalists, commanded by the Laird of Banff, having routed the forces of Frazer and Forbes, took possession of the town, and wreaked their vengeance on all who had subscribed the Covenant. They only remained five days in the town, and, on their departure, it was occupied by the Earl of Marischal, who in turn harassed the royalists. As soon as Montrose heard of these occurrences, being doubtful of the fidelity of the inhabitants, he marched to Aberdeen again, disarmed the citizens, and imposed a heavy fine upon them. The citizens, who had been impoverished by these unjust

exactions, were somewhat relieved, when Montrose, their greatest scourge, after another short visit, marched into Angus and disbanded his army.

It was in the month of June that the citizens began to feel themselves elated by the prospect, if not of peace, of the seat of the war being removed from their dwellings, on the disbanding of Montrose's forces, and at liberty to say anything about the Covenant that might seem good unto them. Those who had subscribed it under the influence of fear (and they were not a small number) veered round to the king's party, and sounded the praises of the Viscount of Aboyne, who had landed at Aberdeen on the part of his Majesty. Their former losses and sufferings were all forgotten, and a general disposition for rejoicing was to be seen among them. Provost Leslie and his colleagues were inclined to encourage this, as it might lead those who had a hankering after the Covenant to turn to the loyal side, which allowed them greater latitude in their games and plays. It was therefore announced that, in the ensuing week, the pastime of Robin Hood and Little John (which had not been celebrated in the beginning of May, the usual time, on account of the disturbances) should be practised on the playfield, along with the usual helps to merriment.

Of all the crowds that poured out from the town on that day to see the spectacle, it is our business only to take notice of a young man and maiden that tripped along just as it was commencing. They appeared to be of the first order of the citizens. The maiden was a lively, interesting little girl, with blue eyes and a fine complexion; her limbs moulded into the most exact symmetry, and her whole appearance in the utmost degree fascinating. Her dress was white, with a sort of scarf or plaid wound round her person, and fastened by a loop and silver button on the left shoulder. Her flaxen hair, except a few ringlets which strayed down her neck, was confined by a silken snood, which, even at that period, was the badge of Scottish maidens. Her companion was above the middle size, of rather a slender make and ruddy complexion, with expressive dark eyes, and coal black hair flowing down, according to the fashion of the royalists, in large and glossy curls. He was about twenty years of age, and though his figure was somewhat boyish, —or feminine if you will,—yet the fire of his eye, the intelligence of his countenance, and the activity of his frame, confirmed his claims to manhood. Although the young man intended only to be a spectator of the revels, he was dressed in green, with bow and arrows, which was the dress of the actors of the play.

As they approached the playfield, now called Gilcomston, the shouts of the delighted populace were heard, mingled with the sounds of the pipe, fiddle, and trumpet, the songs of the minstrels, and the cries of the jugglers. The Abbot and Prior of Bon-Accord (or, as they were called after the Reformation, Robin Hood and Little John) had just arrived; and having been greeted by the populace, were forming a ring for the celebration of the sports, which was guarded by a body of their archers. We have no need to detail the performance; suffice it to say, that the piece was intended for a satire on the Covenanters, they being shown to the lieges under the semblance of evil spirits, and the royalists of angels of light. Towards the close of it, the young man whom we have mentioned felt his sleeve pulled by a person behind him.

"Thou art he whom I seek," said the person who thus forced himself on his notice; "and thy name is Basil Rolland."

"It is," returned he; "declare your business."

"Not here. Thou seest we are surrounded by the multitude. Remove

with me to a little distance, for I would hold some secret converse with thee."

"That may not be. I came to squire this maiden to the revels, and may not leave her alone."

"Suffer the damsel to tarry here for a short space, and follow me to a little distance."

"Go with the stranger, Basil," said she, "and I will remain in the same spot till you return."

"Do so then, Mary," said Basil; "I'll return anon."

As they retired to some distance from the crowd, Basil had leisure to note the appearance of the stranger. From his dress little could be learned; it was in the extremity of plainness. He had been a man of uncommon muscular strength, but it seemed much decayed, perhaps from the struggles of an active life. His eyes were sunk, but retained their lustre; and premature furrows were on his brow. When he halted, Basil addressed him:

"Will it please you then, sir, to communicate your tidings?"

"Then I ask thee, Basil Rolland, what dost thou here?"

"Why, grave sir, I'll answer thy question with another," said Basil, laughing at this solemn opening of the conference: "what dost *thou* here?"

"My gray hairs, young man, are a testimony unto thee that I come not here on any light matter."

"Why then, my foolish face may be a testimony to thee of the lightness of the cause that brought me hither. Marry! we have at last got rid of Montrose and his prickeared gang, wherefore we may be allowed to enjoy ourselves on the prospect of peace."

"Enjoy thyself!" said he. "And what enjoyment canst thou gain from these absurd and impious mummeries? They are a sacrifice to the evil one; a bloody engine of Prelacy to betray the unthinking soul. Peace! What have ye to do with peace? Have not thy friends been treacherous as a snare, and unstable as water? Hath not the finger of Heaven written bitter things against them for their guile and deceit? Have not their enemies trampled them under foot, and they in whom they trusted been as a scourge and as a snare unto them? Have they not been lukewarm in the good cause, regarding the favour of men more than the will of God? Are they not even now triumphing at the hurt of Israel, and rejoicing that the pure evangel has been withdrawn from them? Let them lean on those whom they have chosen, and well shall it be for them if they can protect them against the just wrath of the godly."

"Your words are dark and threatening, old man, but to me they appear as the ravings of a feverish dreamer. You seem to tell me of some danger hanging over us; but our enemy's forces are disbanded, and in my judgment there is nothing to fear. The town is fortified: Aboyne, with a strong army, possesses it. So away with these fancies; and if you have aught to say that concerns me particularly, say on, for I must return to my sister."

"Thy sister? Well, Mary Leslie may deserve the name. I am thy friend, wherefore I am so thou shalt quickly know. Ponder well what I have said. Remember that the calm often precedes the storm, and that it is better to take part with the faithful, even in adversity, than to be the friend of covenant-breaking, soul-seducing prelatists. I will see thee to-morrow at the booth of Samuel Fairtext at eventide. Meet me there, and it shall be for thy good. Farewell, mayst thou be partaker of all covenant blessings."

So saying, he walked off, and in a short time was lost among the crowd, leaving Basil at a loss what to make of his insinuations. When he came up with Mary Leslie, the Skinners, who represented the royalists, had succeeded in driving the Litsters, who represented

the Covenanters, into a smoky den or booth, which, in a moment after, took fire, while the whole angelic train joined in a song to the praise of the Viscount of Aboyne.

He remarked, however, that the spectators were now very inattentive to the sports. They were drawn together into small knots, all over the field, in earnest conversation, which, as it became more general, entirely drowned the iron voices of the performing cherubs. The spectators began to leave the field in great numbers. Robin Hood's body-guard even followed their example, and Little John, by the same inexplicable spirit of discontent, deserted his friend and leader. The whisper (as it was at first) was not long in extending to the spot where Basil and Mary were standing. The cause of the disturbance may be gathered from the following conversation :—

"Now, the like o' this I never saw," said Thomas Chalmers, deacon of the fleshers. "That deil's buckie Montrose is to the road again, an' comin' wi' thousands upon thousands to the town. Fient a hoof mair will I get killed till we be clear o' him."

"Weel, weel," said Jamie Jingle, the bellman, "it's a gude thing it's nae waur. Come wha like, they'll aye need a bellman."

"Nae waur, ye clappertongue!" said another. "I wad like to ken what waur could come? Willna a' thing we hae be spulzied by thae rascals,—black be their cast !—an' wunna there be anither speel at the Covenant, whilk we hae a' ta'en an' unta'en about half-a-dozen o' times already ?"

"Ye're vera right, Saunders," said the chief of the tanners ; "but for a' that, Aboyne may gie him his kail through the reek ; and, if the news be true, there will be a great demand for shoon and belts, whilk sud be a source o' comfort, ye ken."

"What hae I to do wi' your belts an' your brogues, Benjie Barkhide? What hae I to do wi' them, I say? A murrain on the Covenanters, say I, and a' that pertains to them."

"A curse on the Covenanters an' prelatemongers baith, conjunctly and severally !" said another citizen. "I wish the deil would smite his nose with the hale clanjamphry, though he sud get me to the bet o' the bargain, for wishing them sae."

"Wha would hae thought o' this in the morning?" said Barkhide. "Weel, lads, I think we sud a' gae hame, an' put as mony o' our bits o' things out o' the way as we can."

They departed, and this sentiment becoming general, in a short time the playfield was emptied of the revellers.

As Mary and Basil moved homewards with the rest, the latter evaded the questions put to him concerning the stranger. He saw, however, a coincidence between his darkly expressed hints and the events of the day; and while he resolved for the present to keep this secret, he anxiously wished for the promised interview.

Chapter II.

The red cross glares on Frazer's towers,
My love, I dare not stay;
The bugle peals through Lovat's bowers,
My love, I must away.—*Old Ballad.*

We shall now conduct the reader to a shop in the Broadgate, over which appeared in ancient characters,—

Patrick Leslie & Samuel Fairtext.

It is not to be supposed that the street had the same appearance which it now exhibits; neither are the unsophisticated to imagine that the shops resembled those of our own times, with lofty roofs, gigantic windows, mahogany counters, splendid chandeliers, and elegant gas burners. The windows were not much larger than the loop-holes of a modern prison; the roof was low and covered with cobwebs, and the goods exposed for sale were all lying at sixes and sevens. The forepart of the shop extended about ten feet forward into the street, and was decorated on the outside with swatches of the various commodities that were to be sold within. In the back shop, which was nearly as dark as midnight, were deposited the whole of the goods, except the specimens just mentioned. In the inmost recess of these penetralia, was Provost Leslie, with three or four stout fellows, removing, under his command, the goods in the back shop or warehouse.

"Saunders," said the provost, "ye'll tak awa yon silks an' velvets, and put them into the vault i' the dryest—ay, that's anither flask broken, ye careless gowk! I'll set ye about your business gin ye wunna tak mair tent. As soon's you get that barrel awa, ye'll tak down the Prayer-Books from that shelf, and put up twa or three dozen o' Confessions o' Faith. An', my little man, ye'll run up to my lasses, and tell them to leave a' their wark an' come down to grease the sword blades, for fear that they rust in the cellar, an' syne tell the same to Sammy Fairtext's maidens, an' bring them a' wi' you as fast's ye can.—Ay, Basil, are ye there? Troth, gentle or semple, ye maun help's the day. You are a canny lad, sae try if ye can collect a' the trinkets and the siller cups and spoons, and take them up by to my chamber.—Ye ne'er-do-weel! ye haverel, Sandie Hackit, what garred you spill the wine on that web? Ye needna mind it now, ye sorrow; it's nae worth puttin' out o' Montrose's way."

When Basil Rolland returned from executing his commission, the stranger whom he had seen on the former day was in the shop, engaged in conversation with Fairtext. The latter bade Basil conduct him to his house, whether he himself would follow when he had dispatched some necessary business. When they were seated, the stranger began—

"Thou hast seen, youth, that the things which I hinted to thee are in part come to pass. The city is in confusion, the men of war are discouraged, so that they will assuredly be a prey, and a spoil, and a derision to their adversaries. What dost thou now intend?"

"What but to join the army of Aboyne, and do battle with my best blood against these murdering rebels."

"And what would be thy reward, young man? Thy good sense tells thee that it is wrong to deprive free-born men of liberty of conscience. You would fight for your own slavery. Charles is one who regardeth not cove-

nants. He will reward jugglers and lewd ones, rather than those who have shed their blood for his wicked house. But he already totters on his throne, and the day may not be distant when he himself shall cry for mercy from those whose fathers, mothers, and children he hath slain. If you are vanquished in the approaching contest, all with you is lost; if successful, you are nothing the better, except for upholding a Papistical hierarchy, the raw project of a godless debauchee. Thy grandfather did battle on the wrong side, and, after his fall at the battle of Pinkie, the family fell from its former power, which it has never been able to regain."

"Let me ask what comfort or reward could I expect by deserting my friends? The Covenanters have renounced their oath of allegiance, and have imbrued their hands in their countrymen's blood. Good can never follow an enterprise begun by perjury, and continued with carnage."

"And did not Charles first deliberately break his oath and the covenant made with the people? The paction was therefore nullified by him, and could not bind the other party. If they have shed blood, their blood has been shed; and it was not till every attempt at pacification failed that they took up the carnal weapon. And, for comfort, I have long supported this cause, and I can look back with greater pleasure to my conduct in this respect than thou canst on the picture of thy lady love which even now is peeping from thy bosom."

"It is my mother's picture," said Basil, blushing to the eyes.

"Thy mother's!" said the stranger, while, with an emotion which he had not yet exhibited, he caught at the picture with such violence as to break the silken riband with which it was suspended, and, unconscious of Basil's presence, riveted his eyes upon it, scanning the features with the greatest eagerness.

"The same, the same," said he to himself; "the arched brow and the feeling eye, the smiling lips and the rosy cheek. But where is the principle that gave these their value? Where is the life, the soul?" continued he, kissing the senseless painting. "How inferior was this once to thy beauty, and how superior now to thy mouldering ashes! Didst thou appear as the ideal charmer of a flitting dream, or wert thou indeed the pride of my youth, the light of my eyes, and the mistress of my heart? Thou wert! thou wert! my sorrows tell it.—Preserve this picture, young man. Thou never, alas! knewest a mother's love—or a father's affection: the former flame was rudely quenched, the latter burned unknown to thee."

"Then you knew my mother?"

"Ay, Basil, I knew her. We ran together in infancy, we danced together on the braes of Don, and wove each other garlands of the wild-flowers that grew on its banks. Then we thought this world was as heaven, while we were as innocent as angels. As we grew up, the sun, the wood, the rock, was our temple, where we admired the beauteous novelty of this earth. All was love, and peace, and joy; but sorrow came, and those sweet dreams have vanished."

During these unexpected communications, Basil felt himself strangely agitated. The old man seemed to know his history, and with a mixture of doubt and anxiety he inquired if he knew his father.

"*I* am thy father," said the stranger, weeping, and throwing himself into his arms; "I am thy parent, thy joyous, sorrowing parent. How often have I wished for this day! It is now come, and thou art all that I could wish—except in one thing, and that is not thy fault. I have claimed thee at a time when the boy must act the man, and take part boldly in the great struggle.

We must depart from this place to-night. The citizens, thou knowest, are summoned to join the royalists under pain of death, so that we may be delayed if we tarry longer."

"But whither, my father, shall we go?" said Basil.

"Where but to the persecuted remnant that are even now struggling for freedom. We will fight under the banner of the Covenant."

"I have now found a father," said Basil, "and his commands I must and will obey; but you will not bid me lift the sword when every stroke must fall upon an acquaintance or a schoolmate?"

Isaac Rolland then began to mention to his son the reasons which induced him to join this party. He had no more of enthusiasm than it becomes one to have who knows he is embarked in a good cause. He mentioned his own early history, which we shall blend with that of his son. He had been one of the mission, headed by Sir Thomas Menzies, that visited King James in 1620 on civil business. About eighteen months before, he had lost a loving and beloved wife, with whom he had been acquainted from early infancy. She died on the birth of Basil. After this affliction, Isaac Rolland could find no pleasure in the place of his nativity, where everything reminded him of some dear departed joy; wherefore, having interest to obtain a situation at court, he left his only son Basil under the guardianship of his friend Fairtext, and contented himself by hearing often about him, without ever visiting him till the time at which this story commences. Rolland was acquainted partially with the circumstances of his birth. He knew that his mother died when she gave him life; he knew also that his father existed, but nothing farther. Isaac laid before his son, in a clear and methodic manner, the reasons for which the Covenanters took up arms, the reasonableness of their demands, and the tyranny of their enemies. He neither palliated nor denied the excesses of either party, but contended that these should teach all to use their superiority mercifully. The forcible point of view in which he set his arguments wrought instant conviction in Basil's mind, which his father observing,—

"Come, then," said he, "and let us prepare for this struggle. If we be successful (and shall we not be so in such a cause?), we shall have the consolation of having given peace and freedom to the land. I have a sufficiency of world's goods, and thou and thy Mary—nay, start not, I know all—thou and thy Mary will be the support and comfort of my old age, and the subject of my last prayer, as ye have been of many, many in the days bygone. Bid your friends farewell, and an hour hence we meet to part no more. Be cautious, however, my son, for these men of Belial have set a guard on the city, and death is the lot of all who seem about to leave it. Farewell! God bless thee, my dear son;" and he again folded him in his arms.

When Basil was left to himself, it would have been difficult to say whether he was more sorrowful or joyful. He had found his father, a fond and doting father; but his heart revolted at turning his back on the scenes of his youth and the smiling face of his Mary. The latter was the more distressing. She had listened to his suit, and the good-natured provost, when acquainted with it, had sworn that no other should marry his Mary. His own father seemed to approve his passion; wherefore he resolved to bid her farewell, and moved accordingly to the provost's house.

She was alone, and received him with her usual smile of joy, but was startled at the unusual expression of sorrow on his countenance. "Mary," said he; but his lips could articulate nothing farther.

She became alarmed. "Basil, you are ill!" said she.

He seized her hand. "Mary, I am come to bid you farewell—perhaps a long farewell."

She became pale in her turn, and asked him to explain himself. He resumed,—

"When we were young, Mary, you were my only companion, and I yours. You were unhappy when away from Basil Rolland, and I when absent from Mary Leslie. When, in the folly of play, I had girded myself with your father's sword, you complained to him, while the tears ran down your cheeks, that brother Basil was leaving you to become a soldier. Such things at the time are trifling; but how often are they the types of blessed love in riper years. I am now to leave you to mingle in scenes of strife: let me carry with me the consciousness of your continued love; confirm to me the troth that you have plighted, and, come life or death, I shall be happy."

"But why, O Basil, why are you leaving us? Have we not more need of thy presence than ever?"

"I have found my father, and by his command I leave you this very night."

"This night!" said she, while the tears coursed in torrents down her pale cheek. Basil caught her in his arms, and they wept together who had never known sorrow before.

"Be comforted, Mary," said Basil at length; "we shall meet again, and the present sorrow will enhance the gladness of the meeting. My happiness depends entirely on you, and my father looks fondly to our union."

"Oh! when you are gone far from this, you will soon forget the vows that you have made. I have no mother to guide me; oh, do not then deceive me, Basil."

"I swear that my heart never owned the influence of another, and that its last beat shall be true to you."

"Then," said she, throwing herself into his arms, "I am happy!"

Basil hastily explained to her what he knew of his destination, and, with a chaste kiss of mutual transport, they separated.

He acquainted no other person with his intention of departing, but returned to make some preparations for his journey. These were soon completed; he was joined by his father, and leaving the town at sunset, they walked leisurely to Stonehaven, where Montrose's army was encamped.

CHAPTER III.

See how he clears the points o' faith.—*Burns.*
Hamlet. Hold you the watch to-night?
Horatio. We do, my lord.—*Shakspeare.*

DAY was dawning as our travellers reached the camp of the Covenanters. They rested for some time to partake of victuals, which their journey rendered necessary. Isaac Rolland then judged it proper to present his son to Montrose, and accordingly conducted him to Dunottar, where the general then was. They were admitted to his presence.

"I expected you sooner, Rolland," said Montrose. "What intelligence have you gathered?"

"The enemy are preparing to take the field with a numerous and well-appointed force, and I have gathered, from a sure source, that it is their intention to attack our forces as soon as some needful supplies are received from the north."

"How do the citizens stand affected?"

"Almost to a man they have joined Aboyne. They have fortified the city and the bridge, and are determined to hold out to the last."

"The ungrateful truce-breaking slaves!" said Montrose. "But vengeance is at hand. Who is this young man whom thou hast brought with thee?"

"My son," said Isaac, "whom grace hath inclined to take part with us."

"A youth of gallant bearing! Young man, thy father's faithfulness is a warrant for thine. Let thy fidelity equal thy reputed spirit, and thou shalt not lack the encouragement due to thy deserts. You may both retire to rest, and I will apprise you of the duties required of you."

They saluted the general, and retired.

A foraging party returned with a report that Aboyne was already on his march. This was found to be incorrect by some scouts who had been dispatched that evening to gather what information they could about the enemy's motions. They brought the intelligence, however, that Aboyne's equipments were completed, and that it was the popular belief that he would march immediately to meet the Covenanters. Preparations were accordingly made for immediate marching. Numerous foraging parties scoured the adjacent country for provisions, and horses for transporting the baggage and ammunition. According to the custom of the Congregation, when about to engage in warfare, the next day was appointed for a general fast throughout the host.

There perhaps never was assembled any body for the purposes of religious worship that exhibited such an appearance of romantic sublimity as the Covenanters did on such occasions. At the present time they were assembled under the blue canopy of heaven, in a hollow valley betwixt two mountains, the summits of which were planted with sentinels, to give notice to the main body of any interruption. Upon the declivity of one of the mountains was erected a wooden pulpit, before which was assembled the army, to the number of about 2000 men. A dead stillness prevailed among them, while the preacher, a man richly endowed with that nervous and fiery eloquence which was the most effectual with men in their situation, explained to them a passage from the fifteenth chapter of Second Samuel:—"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." This passage he applied to the condition of the Covenanters. He described the sufferings and grievances of the persecuted kirk, and showed that the Almighty did not disregard these, but, in His own time, would avenge the blood of His saints. He told them that God was now calling on all who were on His side to fight for the good of the land, and that His soul could have no pleasure in those who drew back from the approaching contest. "And now," said he, while the fire flashed from his eyes, as with prophetic ardour, which was answered by a corresponding enthusiasm in his hearers; "and now the men of Babylon have set up an image of gold, even a molten image, and they say, 'Fall down and worship the image that we have set up;' and they have fenced themselves with trenched cities, and they have encompassed themselves with spears, and a multitude of horsemen and slingers, and archers, and they say unto this help from Egypt, 'This shall be for a deliverance unto us.' But fear not ye the multitude of their strong ones, neither be dismayed at the neighing of their horses; for the Lord of hosts is on our side, and His right hand shall

work valiantly for us. He breaketh the iron weapon, and burneth the chariot in the fire. He laugheth at the bow of steel and the rattling of the quiver. Walled cities are no defence against His hand, nor the place of strength, when His thunder muttereth in the sky. Wherefore, gird up your loins to fight the battles of the Lord. Smite the Amalekites from Dan even unto Beersheba. Destroy the lines of their tents, and their choice young men, that the reproach may be removed from the camp of Israel. Turn not aside from the sacrifice like the faint-hearted Saul, but smite them till they be utterly consumed, and their name become a hissing, and an abomination, and a by-word upon the earth. Think on your children, and your children's children, from age to age, who shall hold your name in everlasting remembrance, and look to the reward of Him who sitteth between the cherubim, who hath said, that whosoever layeth down his life for My sake shall find it.

"The days are now come when the father shall deliver up the son to death, and the son the father; when the brother shall be divided against the sister, and the sister against the mother. But the days of Zion's peace shall also come, when all the princes of the earth shall bow down before her, and call her the fairest among women. (Canticles, sixth and first.) The house of the Lord shall be established on the tops of the mountains. The New Jerusalem shall appear as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelations, twenty-first and second.) The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor sighing, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things shall have passed away. Go forth, then, to the battle. Quit yourselves like men. Be strong. Look to those ancient worthies who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the alien. Fear not their multitude nor their fury, for he that is with you is greater than your enemies. Think on the persecuted state of Zion, and may the God of battles be for a buckler and a defence unto you!"

A hum of approbation ran along the lines of the Covenanters at the conclusion of this discourse, while the preacher called upon them to join with him in praising the Almighty. The part chosen was that eloquent passage of the eightieth psalm, where the Israelites are spoken of under the similitude of a vine.

As the last note of this hymn ascended in solemn strains to the lofty heaven, several of the scouts made their appearance, with jaded horses, bringing the news that Aboyne was already on his march, and approaching rapidly to Stonehaven. Orders were immediately given to the army of the Covenanters to set out on their journey. These were promptly obeyed, and, in a few hours, the armies met at Megray Hill. This was announced to the Covenanters by their advanced guard being driven back by the royalists. It was not, however, Aboyne's intention to hazard a general engagement, as his soldiers were wearied by the march. But Montrose, dispatching a strong band of infantry, supported by a detachment of cavalry, broke upon them suddenly both in flank and rear, involved them in the greatest confusion, and forced them to seek Aberdeen by a rapid flight, after leaving a considerable number dead on the field. Montrose pursued them, with the greatest possible dispatch, to Aberdeen, where they made a stand. The Bridge of Dee was fortified in a very strong manner, and protected by four field-pieces and a strong guard of the citizens. Montrose

made several attempts at forcing it, but was vigorously repulsed by the defenders, who poured in a shower of missiles with effect on the assailants, while they themselves were so sheltered by their breastworks that they received little injury. Montrose was obliged, therefore, to draw off his forces, and, as it was evening, gave up the thought of any farther attack. Having found a convenient place, he pitched his camp about a mile from the bridge, and stationed his sentinels on the little eminences in its neighbourhood, while those of Aboyne were planted on both sides of the river for a considerable distance above and below the bridge. Both armies, fatigued with the exertions of the day, availed themselves of the repose offered by their situation, and in a short time the busy hum of both camps was changed into stillness.

Our hero had accompanied the army during the march, with that wonder and admiration which youthful minds feel in such spirit-stirring scenes. The strictness of the military duty, the contempt of danger, the degree of subordination and regularity that prevailed (for the abilities of Montrose prevented that ruinous confusion which the camp of the Covenanters too often exhibited), and the promptness and patience with which the necessary commands were executed made an impression on the mind of Basil strongly in favour of his military life. The general, at the commencement of the march, ordered him to be near his person, and by means, as the Covenanters would have said, of a "soul-searching" conversation, contrived to get a clear view of his character and worth. The opinion that he made up was in favour of Basil, and he scrupled not to give him more direct assurances of his favour than he had hitherto done. The honours that had been paid him by this distinguished statesman and general gave rise to a new train of ideas in his mind; and, as the army was preparing for the night's repose, he was charging the enemy at the head of his own troops, succouring the distressed damsel, and hurling unheard-of destruction on his foes. But the mightiest conquerors have often found themselves conquered when they least expected it; and, as the valiant Don Quixote felt his very soul withering when thinking on the absence of his Dulcinea, so our hero regarded the short time that he had been separated from his Mary to be an age. An ugly river and a hostile army lay between him and his love. If Leander swam across the Hellespont, surely he might cross the Dee, and trust the rest to his prudence and good fortune.

His father was engaged with the general; so out he wandered, and, by his correct local knowledge, succeeded in passing the various sentinels, and getting to the banks of the river, a little below the rocks called the Craig-lug, where he had the fortune to find a small fishing-boat (for, so far back as the year 1290, Aberdeen is celebrated in history for its salmon-fishings). He easily rowed himself across the river, and, fastening the boat on the northern bank, stole along the water's edge, and entered that part of the town which, as fronting the harbour, was not walled. He directed his course to the Broadgate, and, as there were still several stragglers in the street, ensconced himself behind a projecting shop till all should be quiet.

When he left the camp, the night was calm and serene. The breeze that floated by was unable to curl the surface of the river, and the moonbeams were dancing in silvery circles on the placid waters as they gurgled by. But this was not of long continuance. The atmosphere became quickly loaded with clouds, the moon was obscured, the rain fell in torrents, and the sullen howling of the east wind, with the hollow muttering of the thunder, indicated one of

those storms which not unfrequently disturb the beauty of summer. Basil wrapped his cloak the closer around him, and hastened to the provost's house. All in it was dark and still. He knocked; but no one returned an answer. Astonished at this, he endeavoured to open the door, but it resisted his efforts. Being acquainted with all the intricacies of the provost's domicile, he gained admission by a window, but found the house deserted of its inhabitants and stripped of its furniture. Mary Leslie's apartment was then the object of his search. It was also desolate. Her lute, her books, and her landscapes were all removed. In groping through the room, his hand fell on a small picture, which the next flash of lightning discovered to be her miniature. He pressed it to his lips and hid it in his bosom, regarding it, as the holy man did the prophetic mantle, as the last unexpected memorial of a lost friend. It would be vain to attempt to describe his amazement at these appearances. He trembled for his friends, when he knew the deeds of violence that were daily practised in these perilous times. He determined to arouse the neighbourhood—to search for, pursue, and destroy in one breath, all who had been any way concerned in this outrage. Reason, however, came to his aid, and he saw the utter uselessness of *his* attempting such a thing, except by the assistance that he could obtain from the Covenanters. He therefore turned sorrowfully to retrace his steps, which, from the darkness of the night and the violence of the storm, was not an easy matter. Having rowed himself across the river by the little boat, he was making a circuit to reach the camp, when he saw a light at a small distance from the landing-place. It proceeded from a hut that was built at the foot of the rock for the accommodation of the fishermen. Curious to know who were in it at this untimely hour, he pressed forward, and listened to the following dialogue:—

"Ay! an' will ye tell me that the possession of Joash, the Abiezrite, wasna in Ophrah? But it's just like a' your fouk; ye ken naething about the Scriptures, but daze yourselves wi' that ill-mumbled mass, the prayer-beuk. But your yill's very gude, and far better than what we have."

"I doubtna, my lad," said another voice; "your fouk are sae stocked, I daresay Montrose is gaun to mak you a' Nazarenes, for he gies you neither wine nor strong drink."

"Dinna speak lightly o' the Scriptures, Sawnie Hackit; ye're just a blaspheming Shemei, or a time-serving Balaam."

"Hout," said Hackit, "gie's nane o' your foul-mou'd misca'ings. I wunner what the deil garred you turn a Covenanter, Tammas Granehard, for ye usedna to be that fond o' covenants, unless it was ane for a fou pint stoup at Jamie Jinks' hostelry."

"I wasna aye i' the right way, Sandie, muckle to my shame; but better late mend than never do weel; an' I'm thinking it would be better for you if ye would come wi' us, for your fouk can never stand ours, and, instead o' getting share o' the spuilzie, ye'll maybe get but a weel-clawed crown."

"I doubtna but ye're very right, Tammas; but what would come o' my ten achisons ilka day, forby the jibble o' drink, an' my place at Provost Leslie's?"

"I'm doubtin' your place there'ill no' be worth muckle, if we tak the town. The provost isna a man to be passed over, wha can sae weel afford to pay for's idolatry."

"Did ye ever hear," said Hackit, "o him ever losing ony thing when the whigs had the town one day and the royalists the next?"

"Weel, Sandie," said the other, "I canna just charge my memory wi' ony

thing o' the kind; and gif it wasna, it was that God-fearing man, Samuel Fairtext, that saved him."

"Ay," said Hackit; "and, when the royalists were here, it was the jolly old cavalier that saved Fairtext. Troth, it's the only wiselike partnership that I ken o' at present; for, if they had been baith whigs or baith royalists, they would have been ruined out o' house and ha' ere this time. But, ye see, when the royalists were in the town, Fairtext kept himself quiet, and they wadna meddle wi' him on Provost Leslie's account. And now a' the gudes are removed, an' put under Fairtext's care; sae that the Covenanters wudna tak the value of a shoe-tie frae him, for he can pray and grane as weel as ony o' them. The provost and his dochter have left their ain house, and are to dwell wi' Fairtext till the danger be ower."

By the latter part of this conversation, Basil felt as if the imaginary weight of sorrow were removed from his bosom; but, instead of it, his arms were pinioned on a sudden, by a strong physical force, so firmly, that he was unable to move himself round to discover the occasion of this unceremonious embrace.

"Come here, ye dotterels!" said a strong voice; "ye sit there, gabbin' an' drinkin' awa, nae caring wha may be hearing you. An' you, my birkie, will better be as quiet 's you can, or, deil tak me,—an' I'm no used to swear,—but I'll scour my durk atween the ribs o' ye."

A couple of men now came out of the hut and assisted in dragging Basil into it. As soon as they had forced him in, the person who had first seized him quitted his hold, exclaiming, "Eh, sirs! is that you?" Hackit also let him go, and Basil was able to look around him. There was neither chair nor table in the booth, but turf seats around the walls, plentifully littered with straw. A candle, fixed in the neck of an empty bottle, illuminated the place, and revealed a goodly quantity of bottles, with two or three horn drinking-cups on the floor, by which it appeared that the party had been engaged in a debauch.

Thomas Granehard still kept his hold, and, in a stern voice, demanded what he was?

"What the deil's your business wi' that?" said Hackit. "I ken him, an' that's eneuch."

"But I am strong in spirit," muttered the Covenanter.

"The toom bottles testify that, to a certainty, Tammas," said the other: "But, never mind; get anither stoup, Geordie, an' sit down, Master Basil."

"Blithely," said Geordie; "and troth, Master Rolland, I didna ken it was you, or I wudna hae handled you sae roughly. But sit down, for its a coarse night."

"I may not," said Basil. "I must to the camp. But why do I find you here?"

"Ou," said Hackit, "ye see Geordie and me belangs to Aboyne, for the provost sent a' his servants to him. We're upon the watch the night, ye maun ken. But wha, i' the name of the seventy disciples, could stand there out in a night like this? Sae we made up to the Covenanters' warders, and met in wi' Tammas there, an auld acquaintance; and we thought it best to come here and keep ourselves warm wi' sic liquor as we could get, and let the camps watch themselves."

"Do you know that you all expose yourselves to death for this frolic?"

"There gang twa words to that bargain. We've done a' that could be reasonably expected,—we watched till the storm came."

"Well, you are not accountable to me; I must depart."

"Weel, a gude evening to you. But stop!—now that I mind—ye maun gie me the pass-word."

"The pass-word!" said Basil, in a tone of surprise.

"Ay, the pass-word! Ye see, Sergeant Clinker says to me, 'Now, Saunders, if ony ane comes to you that canna say *Balgownie*, ye're to keep him and bring him to me.' Sae, for as weel's I like you, Master Basil, ye canna pass without it."

"Balgownie, then," said Basil laughing.

Hackit turned on his heel, saying it was "vera satisfactory," when Granehard remembered that he had got a similar injunction; wherefore, making shift to steady himself a little by leaning on his arquebuss, he delivered himself thus:—

"Beloved brethren,—I mean young man,—I, even I, have also received a commandment from ancient Snuffgrace, saying, 'Thou shalt abstain from wine and strong drink; and whosoever cometh unto thee that cannot give the pass, *Tiglathpeleser*, thou shalt by no means allow him to escape, otherwise thou shalt be hanged on a tree, as was the bloody Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite.' Wherefore, now, repeat unto me the word—the light of the moon is darkened—another cup, Sandie—woe to the Man of Sin—a fearsome barking—dumb dogs—Malachi"—— And he sank down in a state of complete and helpless intoxication.

Basil earnestly advised Hackit and his companions to return immediately to their posts, and retraced his steps to the camp, as the reader may judge, not excessively gratified with the issue of the night's adventure.

CHAPTER IV.

With forkis and flales they lait grit flappis,
And flang togedder lyk freggis,
With bougars of barnis they beft blew kappis,
Quhyle they of bernis made briggis;
The reird rais rudelie with the rappis,
Quhen rungis were layd on riggis,
The wyffis cam furth with cryis and clappis,
'Lo! quhair my lyking liggis,'
Quo they;
At Christis Kirk on the Grene that day.—*King James I.*

BASIL was dreaming about Mary Leslie when he was awakened by the dreadful note of preparation. The bugles were sounding, men and horses hurrying to and fro, and a body of Cameronians—or "hill-fouk"—had formed themselves into a conventicle beside his tent, and were listening with the greatest attention to a favourite preacher. When he came out, the scene was beyond measure animating. There was no trace of the late storm, and the little birds sang their accustomed songs. All was bustle, both in the camp of the Covenanters and that of the royalists. The latter were repairing the fortifications of the bridge, which had suffered in the last night's attack. The royalists were already under arms, but Montrose had no design of attacking them, till the ebbing of the tide should render the lower fords passable in case he should be unable to force the bridge. The Covenanters remained idle during the forenoon, while the royalists stood in order of battle, uncertain as to the time of attack.

About two in the afternoon, the shrill sound of a bugle collected the Covenanters to their standards; and Aboyne's

sentinels, who till now had kept on the south bank of the river, fell back to the main body. Our hero was ordered by Montrose to lead a body of horsemen to the lower ford, to remain there till informed of the bridge's being taken, when he was to push to the town and guard Aboyne's house from being plundered, and seize on all papers that might be found in it. He departed accordingly.

Aboyne, being aware that Montrose's intention was to storm the bridge, drew all his forces to its defence. In a valley, at a small distance from the bridge, Montrose stationed the flower of his army, and, with the rest, including the waggoners and other followers of the camp, to make a more formidable appearance, made a feint as if he intended to ford the river above the bridge. This stratagem succeeded, for Aboyne instantly withdrew the greater part of his forces to oppose them, and thus left the most important station almost at the mercy of the enemy. The ambuscade rose immediately, and advanced even to the cannons' mouths. The artillery, however, of that period, was not so formidable as it is now. It was ill-served, ill-directed, and did little execution. A brisk engagement took place at the bridge, which, however, was maintained but a few minutes; for the Covenanters, clearing the bridge of its defenders, and quickly removing the barricades, opened to the right and left a path for their cavalry, who drove the citizens off the field with considerable loss. Aboyne returned quickly with his men to assist the citizens, but their courage was now damped with their loss; so that, by the first charge of the Covenanters, their ranks were broken, and they began to fly in every direction. It was no longer a battle but a rout. The Covenanters hewed down without mercy their flying enemies; and, so exasperated were they at their obstinate fickleness in former times, that the more merciful among them were hardly able to obtain quarter for those who confessed themselves vanquished. Aboyne, with great exertion, having rallied one hundred horse, made for the town, determined if possible to defend it. Montrose dispatched a party after him, and both, plunging their rowels into their horses' sides, dashed forward over friends and enemies indiscriminately, and arrived close at each other's heels in the town. There was no possibility of shutting the gates; so both entered by St Nicholas Port at the same instant. The intention of Aboyne was thus frustrated, and he found it not an easy matter to escape with his followers by the Gallowgate Port.

The inhabitants had waited with breathless expectation the event of this day's battle, and had in some measure made up their minds in case of Aboyne's failure. But the anticipation fell far short of the reality. The town was in the possession of the enemy. At every turning of the streets there were parties engaged in desperate combat, while the troops of cavalry that occasionally passed sometimes trampled down both friend and foe, never more to rise. The poor citizens were endeavouring to escape from the place with whatever of their effects they could lay hands on. The aged were feebly endeavouring to leave the resting-place of their youth. Wives, mothers, and sisters were searching in tears for their friends, while a loud and piercing shriek announced the agony of the maidens when informed of the death of their betrothed. The innocent children in the confusion were left to wander, neglected by their guardians, —and the records from which this tale is compiled say, that a little boy and girl, who were twins, while wandering hand-in-hand in the streets, unconscious of danger, were crushed by the coursers' hoofs, while their mother was hastening to remove them from danger. But why dwell upon the horrors of this scene?

On a signal given, Basil forded the Dee with his followers, and advanced to the city. Having taken possession of his post, he kept himself on the alert, to restrain any irregularity among his men, which the scene before them was but too well calculated to superinduce. The town was given up to be pillaged. It had been set on fire in different places; therefore it required the utmost attention to prevent his followers from mingling with their companions. He had remained at his post a considerable time, when he heard a piercing shriek in a voice well known to him. He sprang to the place whence it seemed to come, and beheld Mary Leslie struggling with a Covenanter, who was plundering her of the trinkets that adorned her dress. "Villain!" said he, drawing his sword; but the exclamation put the Covenanter on his guard. He aimed a fearful blow at him, but the Covenanter's blade, being of better temper than Basil's, stood the blow, while the other was shivered into a thousand pieces. The Covenanter's weapon was now within a few inches of his breast, when Basil, in a state of desperation, enveloped his hand in his cloak, and seizing the blade suddenly, bent it with such force that it snapped at the hilt—when, seizing a partisan that lay near him, he dealt the Covenanter such a blow with it as felled him to the earth. Basil then hastily asked Mary what she did here.

She informed him that the soldiers had broken into the house in search of plunder, and that she had been obliged to fly when she met with the Covenanter. He asked her where her father was. She told him, weeping, that forty-eight of the principal citizens, along with her father, had been bound, and cast into the common prison.

"Then," said he, "you must allow me to conduct you to a place of safety."

"No, Basil, I cannot. My dear father"——

"He is in no danger; and this is no place for maidens;" and running speedily for his horse, he placed her, more dead than alive, behind him, and galloped out of the town.

When he returned, which was about eight, the confusion had in a great measure ceased; the magistrates, by a largess of 7000 merks, having prevailed on Montrose to put a stop to the pillage. When Basil came near to his post, he discovered that the house had been plundered, and that an attempt had been made to set it on fire. Montrose and his suite were standing before it; his father was also there, and ran to meet him.

"Thank God, my son, that thou art come. This," looking round him, "this looks not like treason."

"Come hither, Basil Rolland," said Montrose, "and answer me truly. My bowels yearn for thee; yet if what is testified against thee be true, though thou wert my mother's son, God do so to me, and more also, if thou shalt not die the death. Why—why, young man, didst thou desert the important trust assigned to thee?"

Basil told the naked truth.

"Thou hast done wrong, young man; yet thy father, thy youth, thine inexperience, all—all plead with me for thee."

"Heaven bless you, my lord, for the word," said Isaac Rolland. "My life for it, he is innocent!"

"Believe me," said Montrose, "I would fain that he were so. There is not in his eye the alarmed glance of conscious guiltiness. Answer me again, didst thou not join the camp with traitorous intent? Didst thou not, last night, under cloud of darkness, betake thee to the camp of the enemy to tell the Viscount of Aboyne what thou knewest about the strength and intentions of the host?"

The truth and falsehood were here so blended together, that Basil betrayed signs of the greatest confusion, and was silent.

"Nay, now," said Montrose, "he denies it not; his confusion betrays him. One of the sentinels discovered him,—the very man against whom he this day drew the sword for a prelate-monging maiden. Young man, this hath destroyed my aversion to sacrifice thee; and the good cause demands that such treachery pass not unpunished. If thou hast any unrepented sin, prepare thyself; for yet two days, and thou art with the dead. Bind him, soldiers; and on the second day hence let him suffer the punishment due to his crimes."

"Stop, my lord," said Isaac Rolland, "and shed not innocent blood. O cut not down the flower in the bud! Exhaust your vengeance on me; but spare, oh, spare my son!"

"Entreaty avails not. My duty to the host demands it. And know, I do nothing but what I wish may be my own lot if I betray the good cause. If I betray it, may my best blood be spilled on the scaffold, and may the hangmen put on my shroud!"

This was spoken in an inflexible and enthusiastic tone; but he knew not that he was condemning himself. His wish was accomplished; for they who had that day witnessed his proud desire, ere many years, saw one of his mangled limbs bleaching over the city gates. Basil was led off by the guards; while his father, unable to follow, stood speechless and motionless as a statue.

CHAPTER V.

Farewell, ye dungeons, dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie;
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.—*Old Song.*

BASIL ROLLAND was conducted into one of the cells of the common prison, and, notwithstanding his excitement, fell into a profound slumber; but it was of that troubled kind which nature obtains by force when the mind is disposed for watchfulness. He imagined himself by the sea, on a beautiful summer evening, walking with his love by the murmuring shore. On a sudden they were separated; and he, in a small boat, was on the bosom of the ocean. The tempest was raging in all its grandeur, and the unwilling bark was whirling and reeling on the mountainous waves; it struck upon a rock, and was dashed into a thousand pieces. He felt the waters rushing in his ears; he saw the sea-monsters waiting for their prey; and his bubbling screams filled his own heart with horror. He sunk—but the waters receded and receded, till he stood firmly on a dry rock. A vast plain was around him—a black and barren wilderness, without one plant, one shrub, or one blade of grass. It lay stretched before him, as far as his eye could reach, the same dismal, monotonous scene of desolation. On a sudden, the mists that covered its termination were dispelled, and piles of rocky mountains, whose tops touched the clouds, began to close around him. A vast amphitheatre of smooth and perpendicular stone surrounded him, and chained him to the desert. The rocky walls began to contract themselves, and to move nearer to the spot where he stood. Their summits were covered with multitudes of spectators, whose fiendish shout was echoed from rock to rock, until it fell upon his aching ear. Wild, unearthly faces were before him on every side; and fingers pointed at him with a demoniacal giggle. The rocks still moved on. The narrow

circle on which he stood was darkened by their height—he heard the clashing of their collision—he felt his body crushed and bruised by the gigantic pressure. He raised his voice to shriek his last farewell; but the scene was changed. The grave had given up her dead; and the sea, the dead that were in her. He was among the companions of his childhood; and not one was wanting. The jest and the game went on as in the days of his youth. His departed mother awaited his return; but her kiss of welcome blenched his cheek with cold. Again he was involved in a scene of strife. The death-bearing missiles were whizzing around him; but he had not the power to lift an arm in his own defence. A supernatural energy chained him to the spot, and paralysed all his efforts. A gigantic trooper levelled his carbine at him; the aim was taken deliberately; he heard the snap of the lock; he saw the flash of fire; he gave a loud and piercing shriek, and awoke in agony, gasping for breath.

The sun was shining through the grated window when he awoke, weak and exhausted by his unrefreshing sleep. He found the sober form of the Covenanting preacher seated beside his pallet, with a small Bible in his hand.

"I thought it my duty," said the preacher, "to visit thee, and mark how thou bearest thyself under this dispensation, and to offer thee that consolation, in the name of my Master, which smoothes the passage to the tomb."

"You have my thanks," said the unfortunate youth. "Have you waited long in the apartment?"

"I came at daybreak; but often was I tempted to rouse thee from thy slumbers, for thy dreams seemed terrifying."

"I have indeed passed a fearful night. Fancy has chased fancy in my scorching brain till it appeared reality. But I can spend only another such night."

"I grieve to tell thee, young man, that thy days are numbered: all the intercession of thy father and his friends hath been fruitless. I also talked to James of Montrose concerning thee; for I hold that he hath overstretched the limit of his power, and that there is no cause of death in thee: but he treated me as one that mocketh, when I unfolded the revealed will of God, that the earth will not cover innoeent blood; wherefore turn, I besecch thee, thine eyes to the Lord,—for vain is the help of man. Look to the glory on the other side of the grave. Fear not them which can kill the body, but after that can have no power; but fear Him that can cast both soul and body into hell."

"I fear not, father; I fear not death. I could close my eyes for ever on the green land of God without a sigh. Had death met me in the field, the bugle would have sung my requiem, and I would have laid me on the turf, happy in being permitted to die like a man; but to die like a thief—like a dog—is fearful and appalling. Besides, there are ties which bind to earth souls stronger than mine. Alas! alas! what is the common approach of Death to the stealthy and ignominious step with which he visits me!"

"Compose thyself," said the preacher, "and let these earthly wishes have no place in thy thoughts. Time, to thee, is nearly done, and eternity is at hand. Approach thy Creator, as the Father of Mercy, in His Son. Murmur not at His dispensations; for He chasteneth in love."

"A hard lesson!" said Basil. "Tell me, didst though ever love a wife, a son, or a daughter?"

"I lost a wife and a son," said the preacher with emotion.

"In what manner?" said Basil.

"I visited the west country, on business of the Congregation, and in

my absence the hand of Death was busy in my house. When I returned, my wife and son were both beneath the sod. But God's will be done! They are now in heaven," said he, while the tears stole down his cheeks.

"And," said Basil, "did you never feel a desire again to see them? Did you not wish that the decree of fate had been altered, and that your family had been again restored to you?"

"Often—often," said he, wringing his hands. "God forgive me! often have I murmured at His dispensation. At some seasons I would have bartered my life—nay, my soul's weal—for one hour of their society."

"And yet ye bid me do that which ye confess to be above your efforts! You lost but your wife and child; I lose my own life—my fame—my Mary."

"But your father"——

"Peace! I have no father—no friend—no love. To-morrow's sun will see me as I was before my being; all of me gone, except my name coupled with hated murderers and traitors. Away, away, old man! it drives me to madness. But, if the spirits of the dead can burst the sepulchre, I will be near my murderer. In the blackness of night I will be near him, and whisper in his thoughts dark, dark as hell."

"Have patience"——

"Patience! Heaven and earth! Remove these bonds," said he, striking his manacles together till the vaulted roof echoed the clanking. "Give me my sword,—place Montrose before me,—and I'll be patient! very patient!"—and he burst into a fit of hysterical laughter which made the preacher shudder.

"Prepare to meet thy God, young man," exclaimed the Covenanter. He succeeded in gaining his attention, and resumed: "Thy thoughts are full of carnal revenge, forgetting Him who hath said, 'vengeance is mine.' I tell thee that thy thoughts are evil, and not good. Turn thyself to thy Saviour, and, instead of denouncing woe on thy fellows, prepare thyself for thy long journey."

"Long, indeed!" said Basil, entering into a new train of ideas. "Ere to-morrow's sun go down, my soul, how far wilt thou have travelled? Thou wilt outstrip the lightning's speed. And then, the account! I am wrong, good man; but my brain is giddy. Leave me now,—but, prithee, return."

"I shall see thee again. Put thy trust in the Lord. Compose thy troubled mind, and God be with thee! Thy father is soliciting thy pardon; and he bade me tell thee he would visit thee to-day. I'll go to Montrose myself,—for he shall pardon thee."

The day following, a dark gibbet frowned in the centre of the market-place, erected in the bore of the millstone which lies at this day in the middle of Castle Street. At an early hour the whole square was filled with spectators to witness the tragedy. A powerful band of the Covenanters guarded the scaffold. A deep feeling of sympathy pervaded the multitude, for the wretched prisoner was known to almost every individual. Every one was talking to his neighbour on the distressing event, with an interest which showed the intensity of their sympathy with the sufferer.

"Willawins! willawins!" said an aged woman; "I suckled him at this auld breast, and dandled him in these frail arms. On the vera last winter, when I was ill wi' an income, he was amaist the only ane that came to speir for me; an' weel I wat, he didna come toom-handed. I just hirpled out, because I thought I wad like to see his bonny face and his glossy curls ance mair; but I canna thole that black woodie! It glamours my auld een. Lord be wi' him! Eh, sirs! eh, sirs!"

"Vera right, cummer," said Tenor the wright; "it's a waesome business. Troth, ilka nail that I drave into that

woodie, I could have wished to have been a nail o' my ain coffin."

"And what for stand ye a' idle here?" said a withered beldame, whom Basil had found means to save from being tried for witchcraft, which, as the reader is aware that "Jeddart justice" was administered on these occasions, was tantamount to condemnation. "Why stand ye idle here? I've seen the time when a' the Whigs in the land dauredna do this. Tak the sword! tak the sword! The day 'ill come when the corbies will eat Montrose's fause heart, and "——

"Whisht, sirs! whisht!" exclaimed several voices; and there was a rush among the crowd, which made the whole mass vibrate like the waves of the sea. It was the appearance of our hero, surrounded by a guard of the insurgents. His arms were bound. The cart followed behind; but he was spared the indignity of riding in it. It contained the executioner, a miserable-looking man, tottering in the extremity of old age. It also bore the prisoner's coffin. His demeanour was calm and composed, his step firm and regular; but the flush of a slight hectic was on his cheek. He was attended by the Covenanting preacher, whom, on his coming out, he asked, "If *she* knew of this?" He whispered in his ear. "Then the bitterness of death is past;" and the procession moved on. These were the last words he was heard to utter. He never raised his eyes from the ground till he reached the scaffold, when, with a determined and convulsive energy, he bent his eyes upon the scene before him. It was but for a moment; and they sank again to the earth, while his lips were moving in secret prayer.

We must now retrograde a little in our story, to mark the progress of two horsemen, who, about noon, were advancing with the utmost rapidity to Aberdeen. These were Isaac Rolland and Hackit, Provost Leslie's servant. To explain their appearance here, it will be necessary to notice some events of the preceding day. Isaac Rolland and his friends had applied earnestly to Montrose for the repeal of his hasty sentence; and their representations seemed to have great weight with him. He told them to return early next morning to receive his answer. At the first peep of day Isaac was at his lodgings, and found, to his surprise and sorrow, that news had arrived of the pacification of Berwick late the evening before, and that Montrose had instantly taken horse for the south. There was no time to be lost, and, accompanied by Hackit, he set out on horseback to Arbroath, where Montrose was to rest for a little, and reached it as the other was preparing to depart.

The pardon was readily granted, as peace was now established between all the king's subjects. Montrose, moreover, acknowledged that he had proceeded too hastily.

They accordingly set out on their journey, and spared neither whip nor spur, lest they should arrive too late. They changed horses at Dunottar, and rode on to Aberdeen with all the speed they could make. When about six miles from the town, Isaac Rolland's horse broke down under him, when Hackit, who was behind mounted, seized the papers, and, bidding him follow as fast as possible, pushed on. The noble animal that bore him went with the speed of lightning, but far too slowly for the impatient rider. Having shot along the bridge of Dee at full gallop, he arrived at Castle Street, by the Shiprow with his horse panting and foaming, while the clotted blood hung from the armed heels of his rider.

"A pardon! a pardon!" shouted Hackit, as he recklessly galloped over and through the thick-set multitude, and lancing to the quick his horse's sides with his deep rowels at every exclamation. "A pardon! a pardon!"

cried he, advancing still faster, for the rope was adjusted, and all was ready for the fatal consummation. "Lord hae mercy on him!" His horse with one bound brought him to the foot of the scaffold, and then dropped down dead, while a loud execration burst from the spectators, which drowned his cries. The prisoner was thrown off just in Hackit's sight as he advanced, the Covenanters having dreaded that this was the beginning of some commotion. He threw the sealed pardon at the head of the commandant, and, mounting the scaffold, cut the cord in a twinkling, letting the body fall into the arms of some of the crowd who had followed him; and, quicker than thought, conveyed him into an adjacent house, where every means was tried to restore animation. There was not one who could refrain from tears when they compared the crushed and maimed being before them with the gallant young man he was a few days before. His eyes, bleared and bloodshot, were protruded from their sockets; a red circle surrounded his neck, and the blood, coagulated under his eyes, showed the effects of strangulation. After some time he heaved a sigh, and attempted to raise his right hand to his breast; his intention was anticipated, and a picture that hung round his neck was put into his hand. At this moment Mary Leslie entered the apartment. A tremulous shuddering ran through his frame; he attempted to raise himself, but life ebbed by the effort, and, with a deep groan, he fell back into the arms of death. Mary Leslie, however, did not witness his departure, for she had sunk senseless on the floor. When she recovered, all was calm, save her eye which rolled with the quickness of insanity.

"Hush!" said she; "he sleeps, and you will waken him. I'll cover him with my own plaid, for it is cold—cold." She set herself to cover him, and sang the verse of the ballad—

> My love has gone to the good green wood
> To hunt the dark-brown daes;
> His beild will be the ferny den,
> Or the shade of the heathery braes.
> But I'll build my love a bonny bower——

"Basil, awake! the old man waits you at the Playfield—arise! He hears me not—ha—I remember!" and she sank again on the floor, and was carried home by her friends.

A fair company of young men bore Basil to his grave; and by his side a weeping band of maidens carried Mary Leslie. They were lovely in their lives, and in death they were not separated. One grave contains them both, which was long hallowed by the remembrance of this tragical transaction. The sacred spot has now become common ground, and I have searched in vain for it, that I might shed one tear to the memory of the unfortunate lovers.

The goodwill of his fellow-citizens called Patrick Leslie several times to be their chief magistrate; but life to him had lost its savour, and he lingered for several years in this world as one whose hopes and enjoyments were elsewhere. It was said that Isaac Rolland, at stated intervals, visited the grave of his son, and watered it with the tear of unavailing sorrow. He afterwards involved himself with the factions that tore the kingdom asunder, and, it was supposed, perished at the battle between the Covenanters and Oliver Cromwell, at Dunbar, in 1650.—*Aberdeen Censor.*

THE LAST OF THE JACOBITES.

By Robert Chambers, LL.D.

I had occasion to mention, at the conclusion of my "History of the Insurrection of 1745," that after that period the spirit of Jacobitism became a very different thing from what it had formerly been; that, acquiring no fresh adherents among the young subsequent to that disastrous year, it grew old, and decayed with the individuals who had witnessed its better days; and that, in the end, it became altogether dependent upon the existence of a few aged enthusiasts, more generally of the female than the male sex.

These relics of the party—for they could be called nothing else—soon became isolated in the midst of general society; and latterly were looked upon, by modern politicians, with a feeling similar to that with which the antediluvian patriarchs must have been regarded in the new world, after they had survived several generations of their short-lived descendants. As their glory lay in all the past, they took an especial pride in retaining every description of manners and dress which could be considered old-fashioned, much upon the principle which induced Will Honeycomb to continue wearing the wig in which he had gained a young lady's heart. Their manners were entirely of that stately and formal sort which obtained at the commencement of the eighteenth century, and which is so inseparably associated in the mind of a modern with ideas of full-bottomed perukes, long-backed coats, gold-buckled shoes, and tall walking canes. Mr Pitt's tax, which had so strong an effect upon the heads of the British public, did not perhaps unsettle one grain of truly Jacobite powder; nor is it hypothetical to suppose that the general abandonment of snuff-taking by the ladies, which happened rather before that period, wrenched a single box from the fingers of any ancient dame, whose mind had been made up on politics, as her taste had been upon black rappee, before the year of grace 1745.

In proportion as the world at large ceased to regard the claims of the house of Stuart, and as old age advanced upon those who still cherished them, the spirit of Jacobitism, once so lofty and so chivalrous, assimilated more and more with the mere imbecility of dotage. What it thus lost, however, in extensive application, it gained in virulence; and it perhaps never burned in any bosoms with so much fervour as in those few which last retained it. True, the generosity which characterised it in earlier and better times had now degenerated into a sort of acrid humour, like good wine turned into vinegar. Yet, if an example were wanting of the true inveterate Jacobite, it could not be found anywhere in such perfection as amongst the few who survived till recent times, and who had carried the spirit unscathed and unquenched through three-quarters of a century of every other kind of political sentiment.

As no general description can present a very vivid portraiture to the mind, it may be proper here to condescend upon the features of the party, by giving a sketch of an individual Jacobite who was characterised in the manner alluded to, and who might be considered a fair specimen of his brethren. The person meant to be described, might be styled the Last of the Jacobites; for, at the period of his death in 1825, there was not known to exist, at least in Edinburgh, any person, besides himself,

who refused to acknowledge the reigning family. His name was Alexander Halket. He had been, in early life, a merchant in the remote town of Fraserburgh, on the Moray Firth; but had retired for many years before his death, to live upon a small annuity in Edinburgh. The propensity which characterised him, in common with all the rest of his party, to regard the antiquities of his native land with reverence, joined with the narrowness of his fortune in inducing him to take up his abode in the Old Town.

He lodged in one of those old stately hotels near the palace of Holyroodhouse, which had formerly been occupied by the noblemen attendant upon the Scottish court, but which have latterly become so completely overrun by the lower class of citizens. Let it not be supposed that he possessed the whole of one of these magnificent hotels. He only occupied two rooms in one of the floors or "flats" into which all such buildings in Edinburgh are divided; and these he possessed only in the character of a lodger, not as tenant at first hand. He was, nevertheless, as comfortably domiciled as most old gentlemen who happen to have survived the period of matrimony. His room—for one of them was so styled *par excellence*—was cased round with white-painted panelling, and hung with a number of portraits representing the latter members of the house of Stuart, among whom the Old and Young Chevaliers were not forgotten.* His windows had a prospect on the one hand of the quiet and cloistered precincts of Chessels' Court, and on the other to the gilded spires and gray, time-honoured turrets of Holyroodhouse. Twice a year, when he held a card party, with three candles on the table, and the old joke about the number which adorn that of the laird of Grant, was he duly gratified with compliments upon the comfortable nature of his "room," by the ancient Jacobite spinsters and dowagers, who, in silk mantles and pattens, came from Abbeyhill and New Street to honour him with their venerable company.

Halket was an old man of dignified appearance, and generally wore a dress of the antique fashion above alluded to. On Sundays and holidays he always exhibited a sort of court-dress, and walked with a cane of more than ordinary stateliness. He also assumed this dignified attire on occasions of peculiar ceremony. It was his custom, for instance, on a particular day every year, to pay a visit to the deserted court of Holyrood in this dress, which he considered alone suitable to an affair of so much importance. On the morning of

* Some rascally picture-dealer had imposed upon him a nondescript daub of the female face divine as a likeness of the beautiful Queen Mary. How he accomplished this it is not easy to say; probably he was acquainted with Mr Halket's ardent devotion to the cause of the house of Stuart, at every period of its history, and availed himself of this knowledge to palm the wretched portrait upon the old gentleman's unsuspecting enthusiasm. Certain it is that the said portrait was hung in the place of honour—over the mantelpiece—in Mr Halket's apartment, and was, on state occasions, exhibited to his guests with no small complacency. Many of his friends were, like himself, too blindly attached to everything that carried a show of antiquity to suspect the cheat; and others were too good-natured to disturb a harmless delusion, from the indulgence of which he derived so much satisfaction. One of them, however, actuated by an unhappy spirit of connoisseurship, was guilty of the cruelty of undeceiving him, and not only persuaded him that the picture was not a likeness of the goddess of his idolatry,—Queen Mary,—but possessed him with the belief that it represented the vinegar aspect of the hated Elizabeth. Mr Halket, however, was too proud to acknowledge his mortification by causing the picture to be removed, or perhaps it might not have been convenient for him to supply its place; and he did not want wit to devise a pretext for allowing it to remain, without compromising his hostility to the English queen one whit. "Very well," said he, "I am glad you have told me it is Elizabeth; for I shall have the pleasure of showing my contempt of her every day by turning my back upon her when I sit down to table."

the particular day which he was thus wont to keep holy, he always dressed himself with extreme care, got his hair put into order by a professional hand, and, after breakfast, walked out of doors with deliberate steps and a solemn mind. His march down the Canongate was performed with all the decorum which might have attended one of the state processions of a former day. He did not walk upon the pavement by the side of the way. That would have brought him into contact with the modern existing world, the rude touch of which might have brushed from his coat the dust and sanctitude of years. He assumed the centre of the street, where, in the desolation which had overtaken the place, he ran no risk of being jostled by either carriage or foot-passenger, and where the play of his thoughts and the play of his cane-arm alike got ample scope. There, wrapped up in his own pensive reflections, perhaps imagining himself one in a court-pageant, he walked along, under the lofty shadows of the Canongate,—a wreck of yesterday floating down the stream of to-day, and almost in himself a procession.

On entering the porch of the palace he took off his hat; then, pacing along the quadrangle, he ascended the staircase of the Hamilton apartments, and entered Queen Mary's chambers. Had the beauteous queen still kept court there, and still been sitting upon her throne to receive the homage of mankind, Mr Halket could not have entered with more awe-struck solemnity of deportment, or a mind more alive to the nature of the scene. When he had gone over the whole of the various rooms, and also traversed in mind the whole of the recollections which they are calculated to excite, he retired to the picture-gallery, and there endeavoured to recall, in the same manner, the more recent glories of the court of Prince Charles. To have seen the amiable old enthusiast sitting in that long and lofty hall, gazing alternately upon vacant space and the portraits which hang upon the walls, and to all appearance absorbed beyond recall in the contemplation of the scene, one would have supposed him to be fascinated to the spot, and that he conceived it possible, by devout wishes, long and fixedly entertained, to annul the interval of time, and reproduce upon that floor the glories which once pervaded it, but which had so long passed away. After a day of pure and most ideal enjoyment, he used to retire to his own house, in a state of mind approaching, as near as may be possible on this earth, to perfect beatitude.*

Mr Halket belonged, as a matter of course, to the primitive apostolical church, whose history has been so intimately and so fatally associated with that of the house of Stuart. He used to attend an obscure chapel in the Old Town; one of those unostentatious places of worship to which the Episcopalian clergy had retired, when dispossessed of their legitimate fanes at the Revolution, and where they have since performed the duties of religion, rather, it may be said, to a family, or at most a circle of acquaintances, than to a congregation. He was one of the old-fashioned sort of Episcopalians, who always used to pronounce the responses aloud; and, during the whole of the Liturgy, he held up one of his hands in an attitude of devotion. One portion alone of that formula did he abstain from assenting to—the prayer for the Royal Family. At that place, he always blew his nose, as a token of contempt.

* He paid a visit, in full dress, with a sword by his side, to the Crown Room, in Edinburgh Castle, immediately after the old regalia of the kingdom had been there discovered in 1818. On this occasion a friend of the author saw him, and endeavoured to engage him in conversation, as he was marching up the Castle Hill; but he was too deeply absorbed in reflection upon the sacred objects which he had to see, to be able to speak. He just gazed on the person accosting him, and walked

In order that even his eye might not be offended by the names of the Hanoverian family, as he called them, he used a prayer-book which had been printed before the Revolution, and which still prayed for King Charles, the Duke of York, and the Princess Anne. He was excessively accurate in all the forms of the Episcopalian mode of worship; and indeed acted as a sort of fugleman to the chapel; the rise or fall of his person being in some measure a signal to guide the corresponding motions of all the rest of the congregation.

Such was Alexander Halket—at least in his more poetical and gentlemanly aspect. His character and history, however, were not without their disagreeable points. For instance, although but humbly born himself, he was perpetually affecting the airs of an aristocrat, was always talking of "good old families, who had seen better days," and declaimed incessantly against the upstart pride and consequence of people who had originally been nothing. This peculiarity, which was, perhaps, after all, not inconsistent with his Jacobite craze, he had exhibited even when a shopkeeper in Fraserburgh. If a person came in, for instance, and asked to have a hat, Halket would take down one of a quality suitable, as he thought, to the rank or wealth of the customer, and if any objection was made to it, or a wish expressed for one of a better sort, he would say, "That hat, sir, is quite good enough for a man in your rank of life. I will give you no other." He was also very finical in the decoration of his person, and very much of a hypochondriac in regard to little incidental maladies. Somebody, to quiz him on this last score, once circulated a report that he had caught cold one night, going home from a party, in consequence of having left off wearing a particular gold ring. And it really was not impossible for him to have believed such a thing, extravagant as it may appear.

THE GRAVE-DIGGER'S TALE.

It was one cold November morning, on the day of an intended voyage, when Mrs M'Cosey, my landlady, tapped at my bed-chamber door, informing me that it was "braid day light;" but on reaching the caller air I found, by my watch and the light of the moon, that I had full two hours to spare for such sublunary delights as such a circumstance might create. A traveller, when he has once taken his leave, and rung the changes of "farewell," "adieu," "good-bye," and "God bless you," on the connubial and domestic harmonies of his last lodgings, will rather hazard his health by an exposure to the "pelting of the pitiless storm," for a handful of hours, than try an experiment on his landlady's sincerity a second time, within the short space of the same moon. If casualty should force him to make an abrupt return, enviable must be his feelings if they withstand the cold unfriendly welcome of "Ye're no awa yet!" delivered by some quivering Abigail, in sylvan equipment, like one of Dian's foresters, as she slowly and uninvitingly opens the creaking door—a commentary on the forbidding salute. He enters, and the strong caloric now beginning to thaw his sensibilities, he makes for his room, which he forgets is no longer

his; when, though he be still in the dark, he has no need of a candle to enable him to discover that some kind remembrancer has already been rummaging his corner cupboard, making lawful seizure and removal ("'convey' the wise it call") of the contents of his tea-caddy, butter-kit, sugar-bowl, and "comforter;" to which he had looked forward, on his return, as a small solace for the disappointment of the morning, affording him the means of knocking up a comfortable "check," without again distressing the exchequer.

I had therefore determined not to return to Mrs M'Cosey's; for "frailty, thy name is woman;" and I felt myself getting into a sad frame of mind, as I involuntarily strolled a considerable distance along the high road, pondering on the best means of walking "out of the air," as Hamlet says, when, as the moon receded behind a black cloud, my head came full butt against a wall; the concussion making it ring, till I actually imagined I could distinguish something like a tune from my brain. Surely, said I, this is no melody of my making; as I now heard, like two voices trolling a merry stave—

Duncan's comin', Donald's comin', &c.

Turning round to the direction from whence the sound seemed to proceed, I perceived I was in the neighbourhood of the "Auld Kirk Yard;" where, by the light from his lantern, I could discover the old grave-digger at work—his bald head, with single white and silvery-crisped forelock, making transits over the dark line of the grave, like a white-crested dove, or a sea-gull, flaunting over the yawning gulf.

One stride, and I had cleared the wall of the Auld Kirk Yard.

"You seem merry, old boy!—You are conscious, I presume, that this world has few troubles that can affect you in your present situation—the grave."

"I was takin' my medicine to keep my heart up, sir; but I wasna merry: yet I'm content wi' my station, and am a thocht independent. I court the company o' nae man alive; I boo to nae man breathin'—I quarrel nane wi' my neebours;—yet am I sought after by high and low, rich and puir; the king himsel maun come under my rule—this rod of airn;—though I'm grown frail and feckless afore my time: for healthy as my looks be, I'm aye, aye at death's door; our work, ye see, sir, 's a' below the breath; and that's a sair trade for takin' the wind oot o' a body. Then, I hae my trials,—sair visitations, sic as fa' to the lot o' nae man on this side the grave but mysel! It's true, that when the wind gaes round merrily to the east, I get a sma' share o' what's gaun; but just look at that yird, sir,—as bonnie a healthy yird as ane could delight to lie in;—neist, look at that spear,—a fortnight's rust upon that dibble! Mind, I downa complain;—*Live, and let live,* say I!

"But what's the use of talkin' sae to a life-like, graceless, thochtless, bairn-getting parish?—the feck o' whom, after having lived on the fat o' the kintra-side, naething will sair, but they maun gang up to the town to lay their banes amang the gentles, and creesh some hungry yird wi' their marrow! The fa' o' the leaf is come and gane; an' saving some twa or three consumptions—for whilk the Lord be thankit, as a sma' fend—tak the parish a' ower head—frae head to tail—and for ane that gaes out at my gate-end, ye'll find a score come in at the howdie's!"

"*Damna famæ majora quam quæ æstimari possint.*" *

"I hae lost my Gaelic, sir; but ye speak like a sensible man. The fame o' the place is just as ye say, there's ower mony *merry pows in't.* But see, there's a sober pow, wi' a siller clasp on't."

* The loss of reputation is greater than can be reckoned.

"With all due gravity, may I ask, whose property was that?"

"Hech, man! that's a skeigh tune for a dry whistle; sae, gin ye please, we'll tak our morning first."

So saying, he took his spade, and cutting steps in the side of the grave he was digging, he mounted to the surface; then, walking off a few paces, I saw him strike some dark substance lying on a flat stone; when, to my astonishment, a Flibbertigibbet-looking creature unrolled itself, from a mortcloth, at my feet.

"Hannibal Grub, my 'prentice, sir, at your service.—Hawney, tak the shanker ower to Jenny Nailor's, an' bring a dooble-floorer to the gentleman; an', hear ye, say it's for the minister's wife—fourpenny strunt, Grub, mind—nae pinchin'. If ye meet his reverence, honest man, tell him ye're gaun for oil to the cruizie."

"That auld wizzened pow is a' that's left o' the Laird o' Nettleriggs. It was lying face down, when I cam till't this morning, maist horrifu' to see; for he maun hae turned in his kist, or been buried back upwards! It was ae blawy, sleety nicht, about this time twal-year, when I was sent for express to speak wi' the laird. Thinkin' that he maybe wanted the family lair snodded out, or a new coat o' paint to the staunchels, I set out without delay. I had four mile o' gate to gang on a darksome dreary road, an' I couldna but say that I felt mair eerie than I had ever felt in my ain plantin', amang honest folk. Sae, wi' your leave, I'll just put in ane o' Jenny's screws, afore I gae ony farther. Here's wishing better acquaintance to us, sir.—Is this frae the 'Broon Coo,' Grub?"

"Ay!" groaned an unearthly voice, as if the "Broon Cow" herself had spoken.

"Weel, I gaed, an' I better gaed. 'The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;' the fitfu' changes o' the shrouded moon threw flitting shadows across my path;—whiles like a muckle colley, and syne as if I stood on the brink o' a dreadfu' precipice, when I wad then stand still, till the moon shone again. The bleachfield dogs sent round their lang, uncanny bodings; the vera cocks crawed,—sic horror had the time; the last leaves o' hairst were driftin' an' clatterin' amang my feet—whiles hittin' me like a whup on the face; or tappin' me on the back, as if ane wad say, 'Saunders, this is death!' when I wad then stand stock-still again, my knees fechtin' an' thumpin' at ane anither, and my teeth gaun like a watchman's rattle; while noos and thans, the wind wad howl and birr, as if the Prince o' Air himsel were pipin' to the clouds. I ne'er doubted thae things to be the bodings o' death; but I thocht sic feydoms might hae been better ward on a muckle better man than me. At length I got to the house-door, as the laird's messan began to bark.

"'Look to the door, Peggy!' quo' the gudewife.

"'Ay, mither. Jock, look to the door for your mither, will ye no?'

"'Look till't yersel! Can I gang, when I'm greetin' this way?—Pate—look to the door!'

"'I'm greetin' too,' says Pate.

"'Peggy Mucklewham, will ye no look to the door, for your deein' faither's sake?'

"'Tuts!' quo' Peggy, 'Can ye not get up yersel—fashin' folk?'

"Weel, I then got entrance—the sneck being cannily lifted, an' the bairns makin' a breenge into a hidin' corner, until, by the light o' the fire, they kent my face.

"'Ou, it's auld Saunders, as sure as death. Ay, man, my faither's real ill—he's just gaspin,' and that's a'! Hear till that—that's him whistlin'! Hae ye no brought Towzie wi' ye? Man, Pate and me wad hae'n sic grand fun chasin' the mawkins, when my mither's at the kirk the morn.'

"'Are ye sorry to lose your faither, bairnies?' quo' I.

"'Ou, ay,' quo' Pate, 'but I dinna like to look at him, he maks sic awfu' faces, man; but I hae been thrang greetin', sin' four o'clock even on—twice as muckle's Jock!'

"A lang deep groan now was heard from out o' the spence, whaur the laird was lying; and the bairnies, in a fricht, ran screeching to anither apartment, leaving the youngest wean by the fireside, rowed in ane o' the auld man's black coats.

"'Gude save us, lammie!' quo' I, 'is there naebody tending your puir auld faither? Whaur's uncle, lammie? and aunty? and your minnie, lammie?' I mind weel the bit bairnie's answer—'Unkey a' doon—aunty a' doon—daddy a' doon!'

"Mrs Mucklewham was a stout buirdly quean, like a house-end; and the laird was just a bit han'fu' o' a cratur—a bit saxteen-to-the-dizzen body. They were a pair o' whom it was said, by the kintra-side, that they had married afore they had courted. The laird was an auld man when he brought hame a woman thirty years younger than himsel;—auld folk are twice bairns, and he was beginning to need nursing. It's wonderfu' to think how little a matter hinders gentle-bred folk frae getting on in the warld! A' that Jenny Screameger wantit o' the complete leddy was the bit dirty penny siller; an' sae they were joined thegither, without its ever being mentioned in the contract, or understood, that they bound and obliged themselves to hae a heart-liking for ane anither!

"She had been keepit by the gude-man geyan short by the tether; sae as her hale life was made just a dull round till her—o' rising and lying down—eating, drinking, and sleeping—feeding the pigs, milking the cow—flyting the servant—and skelping the weans a' round;—unless when she dreamed o' burials, or saw a spale at the candle—or heard o' a murder committed in the neighbourhood—or a marriage made or broken aff—or a criminal to suffer on the gallows; till at her advanced time o' life it was grown just as neccessar' that food should be gotten for her mind's maintenance, as it was for her body's.

"'This is a sair time for ye, Mrs Mucklewhaum,' quo' I, as she cam ben frae her bedroom gauntin'.

"'Hey! ho! hy! Saunders—I haena closed an ee thae twa lang nichts! But I hear there's something gaun to be dune noo—Hey! ho! hy!'

"I stappit ben wi' her to the laird's room; and I saw in his face he was bespoken. Everything was laid out in the room, comfortable and in apple-pie order, befitting the occasion. The straughtin' board, on whilk his death's ee was fixed, stood up against the wa'; here lay a bowt o' tippeny knittin' for binding his limbs, and as mony black preens as wad hae stockit a shop; there hung his dead shirt, o' new hamespun claith, providently airing afore the fire.

"'Gin ye be thrang, Saunders, ye needna wait on the gudeman—ye ken his length—and gie him a deep biel,' quo' the gudewife; when just as I laid my hand upon his brow, he fixed his ee upon me like a hawk; an' after anither kirkyard groan—the like I never heard from mortal man—he seemed reviving, an' new strength to be filling his limbs, as he rose up on his elbow, on the bed, and laid his other hand on mine—sic an icy hand as I never felt abune grund!—thus speaking to me in his seeming agony:

"'Saunders, do not pray for me; I have been long a dead man; lay your hand upon my bosom, and you will feel the flames of hell ascending to my soul!' I laid my hand upon his heart, and I declare, sir, I thocht the flesh wad hae cindered aff the finger-banes! The heat was just awfu'!

"'I was made life-renter of a sum

which at my decease descends to the younger branches of my father's family; and my life has been miserable to myself—a burden to others—and my death the desire of my kindred!'

"'He's raving, Saunders—he's clean raving! An' I canna persuade him he's a deein' man,' quo' Mrs Mucklewham, as she stapped forrit wi' a red bottle, to gie him a quatenin' dram.

"'Haud, haud!' quo' I, 'he'll do without it,' as the laird, raising his voice, began again to speak:

"'I had but one friend in the world,—the highwayman that robbed me, and then laid my skull open with the butt-end of his whip;—would to God he had made me a beggar, and saved my soul! I had no worse wish to bestow on him than that he might be a life-renter for his poor relations. Saunders, look on the face of that unfeeling woman—more horrible to me than death itself;—look on my deserted death-bed, and my chamber decorated like a charnel house? Horrible as the sensation of death is, as his iron gropings are stealing round my heart, there is yet to me a sight more hideous, and which I thank God I shall be spared witnessing—*when the dead shall bury the dead*!'

"Mrs Mucklewham broke frae my weak hand—wrenched open his locked teeth, and emptied the hale contents down his throat—grunds an' a'—o' his 'quatenin' draught;' I felt myself a' *ug*, as I saw his teeth gnash thegither, an' his lips close in quateness for ever.

"I gaed out wi' the mortclaith; I saw the gathering; I was present when the bread an' dram service were waiting for the grace:—'Try ye't, John,' quo' ane. 'Begin yersel; ye're dead sweer,' quo' anither; when I heard ane break down an' auld prayer into twa blessin's. Some were crackin' about the rise o' oats; some about the fa' o' hay. His bit callans were there in rowth o' claith; auld elbows of coats mak gude breeknees for bairns. I saw the coffin carried out to the hearse without ane admiring its bonnie gilding—quite sair and melancholy to see! I saw the bedral bodies, wi' their light-coloured gravats, an' rusty black cowls, stuffing their wide pouches—maist pitifu', I thought, to behold. Then I saw the house-servants, wha had drunk deepest o' the cup o' woe; till sae mista'en were their notions o' sorrow, that they were just by the conception o' the mind o' man. Then there was sic a clanjamphry o' beggars; some praising the laird for virtues that they wha kenned him kent they were failings in him; an' ithers were cracking o' familiarities wi' him, that might hae been painful to his nearest o' kin to hear: there was but sma' grief when they first gathered; but when they learned there was nae awmous for them, I trow ony tears that were shed at the burial were o' their drappin'.

"There was the witless idewit Jock Murra, mair mournfu' to see than a' that was sad there; when just as the hearse began to move on, he liltit up a rantin' sang—

Mony an awmous I've got.

I lookit round me when the company began to move on frae the house wi' the hearse; but as I shall answer, sir, there wasna ae face that lookit sad but might as well hae smiled; the very look o't, in a Christian land, brought the saut tears gushing frae my ain auld dry withered ee!

"In compliance with the friends' request, as it was a lang road to come back, his will had been read afore the interment; when sae muckle was left to ae hospital, an' sae muckle to anither, as if the only gude he had ever done was reserved for the day o' his burial; or like ane wha delays his letter till after the mail shuts, and then pays thrice the sum to overtake the coach. It was the certainty o' thae things that made it the maist mournfu' plantin' I e'er made; an' I threw the

yird on him, as he was let down by stranger hands (for the friends excused themselves frae gaun ony farther, after they had heard his will), and happit him up, wi' a heavier heart than on the morning when I took my ain wifie frae my side, an' laid her in the clay.—You'll excuse me, sir; here's 'success to trade!'"—"*The Auld Kirk Yard.*"

THE FAIRY BRIDE:

A TRADITIONARY TALE.

A SHORT time before the rising of the Presbyterians, which terminated in the rout at Pentland, a young gentleman of the name of Elliot had been called by business to Edinburgh. On his way homeward, he resolved to pay a visit to an old friend named Scott, whose residence was either upon the banks of the Tweed or some of its larger tributaries,—for on this point the tradition is not very distinct. Elliot stopped at a small house of entertainment not far from Scott's mansion, in order to give his parting directions to a servant he was despatching home with some commissions.

The signs of the times had not altogether escaped the notice of our hero. The people were quiet, but reserved, and their looks expressed anything but satisfaction. In Edinburgh there were musterings and inspections of troops, and expresses to and from London were hourly departing and arriving. As Elliot travelled along, he had more than once encountered small parties of military reconnoitring the country, or hastening to some post which had been assigned them. Fewer labourers were to be seen in the fields than was usual at the season. The cottars lounged before their doors, and gazed after the passing warriors with an air of sullen apathy. There was no violence or disturbance on the part of the people,—there had as yet been no arrestments,—but it was evident to the most careless that hostile suspicion was rapidly taking the place of that inactive dislike which had previously existed between the governors and the governed.

It was natural that in such a condition of the national temper, affairs of state should form the chief subject of gossip around the fireside of a country inn. Elliot was not surprised, therefore, while sitting at the long deal table, giving directions to his servant, to hear the name of his friend frequent in the mouths of the peasantry. It was a matter of course that at such a period the motions and inclinations of a wealthy and active landholder of old family should be jealously watched. But it struck him that Scott's name was always uttered in a low, hesitating tone, as if the speakers were labouring under a high degree of awe. He continued, therefore, some time after he had dismissed his attendant, sitting as if lost in thought, but anxiously listening to the desultory conversation dropping around him, like the few shots of a distant skirmish. The allusions of the peasants were chiefly directed to his friend's wife. She was beautiful and kind, but there was an unearthly light in her dark eye. Then there was a dark allusion to a marriage on the hill-side,—far from human habitation,—to the terror of the clergyman who officiated, at meeting so lovely a creature in so lonely a place. The Episcopalian predilections of the family of Scott were

not passed unnoticed. And it seemed universally admitted that the house had been given over to the glamour and fascination of some unearthly being. The power of a leader so connected, in the impending strife, was the subject of dark forebodings.

Rather amused to find his old crony become a person of such consequence, Elliot discharged his reckoning, mounted his steed, and on reaching Scott's residence, was warmly and cheerfully welcomed. He was immediately introduced to the lady, whom he regarded with a degree of attention which he would have been ashamed to confess to himself was in some degree owing to the conversation he had lately overheard. She was a figure of a fairy size, delicately proportioned, with not one feature or point of her form to which objection could be urged. Her rich brown hair clustered down her neck, and lay in massive curls upon her bosom. Her complexion was delicate in the extreme, and the rich blood mantled in her face at every word. Her eyes were a rich brownish hazel, and emitted an almost preternatural light, but there was nothing ungentle in their expression. The honeymoon had not elapsed, and she stood before the admiring traveller in all the beauty of a bride—the most beautiful state of woman's existence, when, to the unfolding delicate beauty of girlhood is superadded the flush of a fuller consciousness of existence, the warmth of affection which dare now utter itself unchecked, the first half-serious, half-playful assumption of matronly dignity. After a brief interchange of compliment with her guest, she left the apartment, either because "the house affairs did call her thence," or because she wished to leave the friends to the indulgence of an unrestrained confidential conversation.

"A perfect fairy queen," said Elliot, as the door closed behind her.

"So you have already heard that silly story?" answered his host. "Well! I have no right to complain, for I have only myself to thank for it."

Elliot requested that he would explain his meaning, and he in compliance narrated his "whole course of wooing."

"I was detained abroad, as you well know, for some years after his Majesty's restoration, partly on account of the dilapidated state of my fortunes, and partly because I wished to prosecute the career of arms I had commenced. It is now about nine months since I returned to my native country. It was a gloomy day as I approached home. You remember the footpath which strikes across the hill behind the house, from the bed of the stream which mingles, about a mile below us, with that on whose banks we now are. Where it separates from the public road, I gave my horse to the servant, intending to pursue the by-path alone, resolved that no one should watch my emotions when I again beheld the home of my fathers. I was looking after the lad, when I heard the tread of horses close behind me. On turning, I saw a tall, elderly gentleman, of commanding aspect, and by his side a young lady upon a slender milk-white palfrey. I need not describe her; you have seen her to-day. I was struck with the delicacy of her features, the sweet smile upon her lips, and the living fire that sparkled from her eyes. I gazed after her until a turning of the road concealed her from my view.

"It was in vain that I inquired among my relations and acquaintances. No person was known in the neighbourhood such as I described her. The impression she left upon me, vivid though it was at the moment, had died away, when one day, as I was walking near the turn of the road where I had lost her, she again rode past me with the same companion. The sweet smile, the glance of the eye, were heightened this time by a blush of recognition. The pair were soon lost to me round

the elbow of the road. I hurried on, but they had disappeared. The straggling trees which obscured the view, ceased at a bridge which stood a couple of gun-shots before me. Ere I could reach it, I caught a glimpse of the companions. They were at the edge of the stream, a little way above the bridge—the r horses were drinking. I pressed onward, but before I had cleared the intervening trees and reached the bridge, they had once more disappeared. There was a small break in the water immediately be neath the place where they had stood. For a moment, I thought that I must have mistaken its whiteness for th white palfrey, but the glance I had got of them was too clear to have been an illusion. Yet no road led in that direction. I examined the banks on both sides of the river, but that on which I saw them was too hard to receive a hoof-print, and the opposite bank was loose shingle, which refused to retain it when made. The exceeding beauty of the maiden, the mysterious nature of her disappearance, the irritable humour into which I had worked myself by conjectures and an unavailing search, riveted her impression upon my memory. I traversed the country telling my story, and making incessant inquiry. In vain! No one knew of such a person. The peasants began to look strangely on me, and whisper in each other's ears, that I had been deluded by some Nixy. And many were the old prophecies regarding my family remembered—or manufactured—for the occasion.

"Five months passed away in vain pursuit. My pertinacity was beginning to relax, when one evening, returning from a visit to our friend Whitelee, I heard a clashing of swords on the road before me. Two fellows ran off as I rode hastily up, leaving a gentleman, who had vigorously defended himself against their joint assault. 'Are you hurt, sir?' was my first inquiry. 'I fear I am,' replied the stranger, whom I immediately recognised as the companion of the mysterious beauty. 'Can I assist you?' He looked earnestly at me, and with an expression of hesitation on his countenance. 'Henry Scott, you are a man of honour.' He paused, but immediately resumed, 'I have no choice, and I dare trust a soldier. Lend me your arm, sir. My dwelling is not far from here.' I accompanied him, he leaning heavily upon me, for the exertion of the combat had shaken his frame, and the loss of blood weakened him. We followed the direction he indicated for nearly half an hour round the trackless base of a hill, until we came in sight of one of those old gray towers which stud our ravines. 'There,' said my companion, pointing to the ruin. I recognised it immediately; it stood not far distant from the place where he and his fair fellow-traveller had disappeared, and had often been examined by me, but always in vain.

"Turning an angle of the building, we approached a heap of *debris*, which in one part encumbered its base. Putting aside some tangled briers which clustered around, he showed me a narrow entry between the ruins and the wall. Passing up to this, he stopped before a door, and gave three gentle knocks; it opened, and we were admitted into a rude, narrow vault. It was tenanted, as I had anticipated, by his fair companion. As soon as her alarm at seeing her father return exhausted, bleeding, and in company with a stranger, was stilled, and the old man's wound dressed, he turned to explain to me the circumstances in which I found him. His story was brief. He was of good family; had killed a cadet of a noble house, and was obliged to save himself from its resentment by hiding in ruins and holes of the earth. In all his wanderings his gentle daughter had never quitted his side.

"I need not weary you with the further details of our growing acquaint-

ance. It is the common story of a young man and a young woman thrown frequently into each other's company in a lonely place. But, oh! tame though it may appear to others, the mere memory of the three months of my life which followed is ecstasy! I saw her daily—in that unfrequented spot there was small danger of intrusion, and she dared range the hillside freely. We walked, and sat, and talked together in the birchen wood beneath the tower, and we felt our love unfold itself as their leaves spread out to the advancing summer. There was no check in the tranquil progress of our affections—no jealousies, for there was none to be jealous of. Unmarked, it overpowered us both. It swelled upon us, like the tide of a breathless summer day, purely and noiselessly.

"A few weeks ago her father took me aside, and prefacing that he had marked with pleasure our growing attachment, asked me if I had sufficient confidence in my own constancy to pledge myself to be for life an affectionate and watchful guardian of his child? He went on to say, that means of escaping from the country had been provided, and offers of promotion in the Spanish service made to him. Your own heart will suggest my answer; and I left him, charged to return after nightfall with a clergyman. Our good curate is too much attached to the family to refuse me anything. To him I revealed my story. At midnight he united me to Ellen, and scarcely was the ceremony over, when Sir James tore himself away, leaving his weeping child almost insensible in my arms.

"Two gentlemen, who accompanied Sir James to the coast, were witnesses of the marriage. It was therefore unnecessary to let any of the household into the secret. You may guess their astonishment, therefore, when, having seen the curate and me ride up the solitary glen alone under cloud of night, they saw us return in the course of a few hours with a lady, who was introduced to them as their mistress. Great has been their questioning, and great has been the delight of our jolly priest to mystify them with dark hints of ruined towers, hillsides opening, and such like. The story of the Nixy has been revived, too, and Ellen is looked on by many with a superstitious awe. I rather enjoyed the joke at first, but now begin to fear, from the deep root the folly seems to have taken, that it may one day bear evil fruits for my delicate girl."

His augury of evil was well-founded, but the blight fell upon his own heart. As soon as he heard of the rising in the west, he joined the royal forces at the head of his tenantry. During his absence, and while the storm of civil war was raging over the land, his cherished one was seized with the pangs of premature labour. She lay in the same grave with her child, before her husband could reach his home. The remembrance of what she had undergone, her loneliness amid the tempests of winter, her isolation from all friends, had so shaken her frame that the first attack of illness snapped the thread of life. Her sufferings were comparatively short. But the widower! He sought to efface the remembrance of his loss in active service. Wherever insubordination showed itself, he prayed for employment. The Presbyterians learned at last to consider him as the embodied personification of persecution. The story of his mysterious marriage got wind. He was regarded as one allied to, and acting under, the influence of unholy powers. He knew it, and, in the bitterness of his heart, he rejoiced to be marked out by their fear and terror, as one who had nothing in common with them. His own misery, and this outcast feeling, made him aspire to be ranked in their minds as a destroying spirit. The young, gallant, and

kind-hearted soldier became the most relentless persecutor of the followers of the Covenant. Even yet does his memory, and that of his Fairy Bride, live in popular tradition like a thunderstorm, gloomy and desolating, yet not without lambent flashes of more than earthly beauty.—*Edinburgh Literary Journal.*

THE LOST LITTLE ONES.

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE a story to tell relative to what happened to Sir George and Lady Beaumont, the excellent and beloved proprietors of the Hermitage, in a neighbouring county. At the period of which I speak, their family consisted of five children, three sons and two daughters; and their eldest, a daughter called Charlotte, was then nine years of age. She was a remarkably clever child, and a great favourite of her parents; but her mother used to remark that her vivacity required checking, and, notwithstanding her partiality for her, she never failed to exercise it when it became necessary. It would have been well had others acted equally judiciously.

It happened one day, as the family were going to sit down to dinner, that Charlotte did not make her appearance. The maid was sent up to her room, but she was not there. The dinner-bell was ordered to be rung again, and a servant was at the same time dispatched to the garden; and this having been done, Sir George and his lady proceeded with the other youngsters to the dining-room, not doubting but Charlotte would be home immediately. The soup, however, was finished without any tidings of her, when, Lady Beaumont seeming a little uneasy, Sir George assured her there was no cause for alarm, as Charlotte would probably be found under her favourite gooseberry bush. Lady Beaumont seemed to acquiesce in this, and appeared tolerably composed, till the servant who had been sent to the garden came back to say that she was not there. Sir George insisted that the man had probably passed her without seeing her, the garden being so large; but the servant averred that he had been through the whole of it, and had shouted repeatedly Miss Charlotte's name.

"Oh!" exclaimed Sir George, "she has pretended not to hear you, Robert, and, I daresay, will be back immediately, now that she has succeeded in giving you a race round the garden; however," added he, "you may go back again, and take Samuel and Thomas with you, and if you do not find her hiding herself in the garden, you may take a peep into the shrubbery, as she may slip in there, on seeing you returning; and as you go along, you may call to her, and say that dinner waits, and that Lady Beaumont is much displeased with her being out at this time of the day. And now, my love," continued Sir George to his lady, "just let us proceed with dinner, and compose yourself."

Lady Beaumont forced a smile, and busied herself in attending to her young ones; but her own plate was neglected, and her eyes were continually turned towards the window which looked upon the lawn.

"What can keep Robert, papa?" said Charles to his father.

"Indeed, my boy," said Sir George, "I do not know. Charlotte," continued he to Lady Beaumont, "do you see any thing?"

"They are all coming back," exclaimed Lady Beaumont, "and alone!" and she rose hastily from her chair.

Robert and the other men now entered, and reported that they had searched every spot in the garden and the shrubbery, but without finding any trace of her; and the people who had been working there all day had seen nothing of her. Lady Beaumont now became excessively alarmed, and Sir George himself was far from easy, though he appeared before his lady to treat the matter lightly.

"She'll have gone up to the cottages to see her god-brother," said Sir George; "or perhaps have wandered over to the mill."

"And if she has fallen into the stream!" ejaculated Lady Beaumont.

"Now, dear Charlotte, do not needlessly alarm yourself; there's no fear but we shall soon find her."

"God grant it!" said Lady Beaumont, "but my mind misgives me sadly."

Messengers were now dispatched to the cottages, and to the mill, and in various other directions around the Hermitage, but all came back without having obtained any tidings of the missing child. Sir George, now very seriously alarmed, gave private directions for having the fish-pond, and the stream which ran at the bottom of the garden, carefully dragged. It was done, but nothing was found. The whole household was now in motion, and as the story spread, the tenants and neighbours came pouring from all quarters, with offers to search the country round in every direction; so much was Sir George esteemed and beloved by all classes. Their offers were thankfully accepted, and after choosing their ground, and dividing themselves into different parties, they set out from the Hermitage, resolved, as they said, to find the little one, if she was above ground. Sir George and his lady went out as the parties set off in their different directions, and continued walking up and down the avenue, that they might the sooner perceive the approach of those bringing intelligence; but hour after hour elapsed, and no one came. Sir George then proposed that Lady Beaumont should go home and see the young ones put to bed. She did so, but soon returned again.

"I know," said she, answering Sir George's look, "that you wished me to remain at home and rest myself; but what rest can there be for me, till we have some intelligence of"—— and her voice faltered.

"Well, well, then," said Sir George, pressing her arm in his, "let us take a few more turns—surely we must hear something soon."

The people now began to come dropping in from different quarters, but all had the same melancholy answer—no one had seen or heard of her. The hearts of the poor parents were sadly depressed, for daylight was fast closing in, and almost all those who had set off on the search had now returned, and amongst them their faithful servant Robert, principally from anxiety to learn if any intelligence had been obtained of his favourite. But when he found that all had returned unsuccessful, he declared his determination to continue the search during the night; and he, and a good many others who joined him, set off soon afterwards, being supplied with torches and lanterns of various descriptions.

This determination gave new hopes to the inmates of the Hermitage, and Lady Beaumont endeavoured to rally her spirits; but when at length, as daylight broke, Robert and his party returned

alone, and without intelligence, nature exhausted gave way, and she fell senseless in her husband's arms.

In the morning Robert tapped at Sir George's door, and communicated quietly to him his recollecting to have seen a rather suspicious-looking woman near the Hermitage the previous day, and that he had just heard from a neighbour, that a woman of that description, with a child in her arms, had been seen passing to the eastward. Orders were immediately given for a pursuit on horseback;—Sir George giving directions to bring in every one whom they suspected; saying, that he would compensate those who had reason to complain of being used in this way. But, though many were brought to the Hermitage, and large rewards were offered, yet week after week passed over without bringing them the smallest intelligence of their lost little one.

Some months had elapsed since their child had disappeared, and the minds of the parents had become comparatively composed, when their attention was one evening attracted by the appearance of an unusual number of people in the grounds below the terrace, and whose motions it seemed difficult to understand.

"What can have brought so many people there?" asked Lady Beaumont; "and what are they doing?"

"Indeed, my love, I do not know," said Sir George, "but there's Robert, passing down the walk, and he will tell us;" and he called to Robert, who, however, seemed rather not to wish to hear; but Sir George called again, and so loudly, that Robert was obliged to stop. "Robert," said Sir George, "what do these people seek in the low grounds there?"

"They are looking for —— of Widow Watt's, your honour," said Robert.

"Did you hear what it was, my dear?" said Sir George to his lady.

"No," said Lady Beaumont; "but probably her pet lamb, or more likely her cow, has strayed."

"Is it her cow that's amissing, Robert?" called Sir George.

"No, your honour," said Robert.

"Her lamb then, or some other beast?" asked Sir George.

"Naething o' the kind, your honour," answered Robert.

"What then?" demanded Sir George, in a tone that showed he would be answered.

"Why, your honour, they say that wee Leezie Watt's no come hame, and the folk are gaun to seek for her; and nae doubt they'll soon find her," added Robert, stepping hastily away to join them.

Sir George had felt Lady Beaumont's convulsive grasp of his arm, and gently led her to a seat, where after a while she became more composed, and was able to walk to the Hermitage.

"And now," said she, on reaching the door, "think no more of me, but give all your thoughts to the most likely means of restoring the poor child to its widowed parent."

"Spoken like yourself," said Sir George, pressing her hand; and immediately flew to give directions for making the most thorough and effectual search. But this search, alas! proved equally unavailing as the former one, and no trace whatever could be found of the widow's child.

The story, joined to the disappearance of Sir George's daughter, made a great noise, and created considerable alarm in that part of the country; and this alarm was increased fourfold, when, in three weeks afterwards, another child was lost. The whole population now turned out, and people were stationed to watch in different places by night and by day. But no discovery was made; and, to add to their horror, child after child disappeared, till the number of the lost little ones amounted

to seven. Parents no longer durst trust their children for a moment out of their sight. They went with them to school, and also went to bring them back again; and these precautions had the best effect, many weeks having elapsed without anything unpleasant happening. The neighbours now began to congratulate each other on the probability, or rather certainty, that those who had inflicted so much misery in that quarter of the country had gone somewhere else, and that they would now be able to live in some kind of peace and comfort. But this peaceful state was not destined to continue.

One of Sir George's best tenants, David Williams, had been busily engaged in ploughing the whole day, and was thinking of unyoking and going home, when his wife looked over the dyke, and asked him how he was coming on. "But whaur," continued she, "are the bairns? are they at the t'ither end o' the field?"

"The bairns!" said David, "I haena seen them; but is't time for their being back frae the school?"

"Time!" exclaimed his wife; "muckle mair than time, they should hae been hame an hour syne; and that brought me out to see gif they were wi' you, as you said ye wad may be lowse and gang to meet them!"

"'Od, I was unco keen," said David, "to finish this bit lea, and had nae notion it was sae far in the day."

"Preserve us!" exclaimed Matty, "gif anything has happened to them!"

"Nonsense," cried David, "when there's three o' them thegither; but, here," says he, "tak ye the beasts hame, and I'se be off, and will soon be back wi' them; sae dinna vex yoursel."

"I hope it may be sae," said Matty, "but my heart misgies me sair—however, dinna wait to speak about it."

David Williams was not long of reaching the school, where he learned from the mistress, that his children had remained a good while after the rest, expecting him to come for them; but that they had at length set out to meet him, as she understood, and that they had been gone above an hour, and she thought they would have been home long ago. "But, perhaps," continued she, "they may have called in at their aunt's, for I heard them speaking of her to-day."

David took a hasty leave, and posted away to his sister's, but the children had not been there, nor had any one seen them. His brother-in-law, John Maxwell, seeing his distress, proposed taking one road, while David took the other, towards home, and to meet at the corner of the planting near his house. They did so, and arrived nearly at the same time, and each without having heard or seen anything of the children. David Williams was now in a perfect agony, and the perspiration ran like water from his forehead.

"Maybe they're hame already," said his brother-in-law; "I daurna gang up mysel to speir, bit we'll send yon herd laddie."

John went, and gave the boy his directions to ask, first, if David Williams was at hame, and then to ask, cannie-like, if the weans were in. He then sat down beside David, keeping his eye on the cottage, when he sees Matty come flecing out like one distracted.

"Down, David! down wi' your head, man," cried John, "that she mayna see us." But Matty had got a glimpse of them, and came right down on them as fast as she could run.

"Whaur's my bairns, David?" cried she; "whaur's our bonnie bairns? I kent weel, whenever the callant askit if they were come hame, what was the meaning o't. They're lost, they're lost!" continued the poor woman, wringing her hands, "and what'll become o' me?"

'Now Matty, Matty, my ain wife,"

said David, "dinna ye gang on at that gate, and hurt yoursel; naebody but John and me has been looking for them, and we've come straught hame, and there's a heap o' ither ways, ye ken, that they may hae gane by."

"Ay, ower mony—ower mony ways, I'm doubtin'," said Matty mournfully, shaking her head; "but dinna let us put aff time this gate. Rin ye baith an' alarm the neebours, and I'll awa to the Hermitage, where we're sure to get help; and God grant it mayna end wi' mine as it did wi' ithers!"

CHAPTER II.

"BY heavens!" exclaimed Sir George, while the blood mounted to his forehead, "but this is infamous. Ring the alarm bell," continued he, "and let all my tenants and domestics turn out on foot or on horseback, and form as large a circle round the place as possible; and let them bring out all their dogs, in case this horrid business is caused by some wild animal or another which may have broken from its keeper; and Robert," continued Sir George, "see that no strangers are allowed to pass the circle, on any pretence whatever, without my having seen and examined them."

These orders were immediately obeyed, and the alarm having spread far and near, an immense body of people quickly assembled, and commenced a most determined and active search, gradually narrowing their circle as they advanced.

Lady Beaumont, ascending to the top of the Hermitage, which commanded a view of the whole surrounding country, watched their proceedings with the most intense interest; trusting that the result would be not only the restoration of David Williams' children, but the discovery also of the others which had disappeared, and of her own little one amongst the number. At times, single horsemen would dash from the circle at a gallop, and presently return with some man or woman for Sir George's examination; and while that lasted, Lady Beaumont's heart beat fast and thick; but the dismissal of the people, and the re-commencement of the search, painfully convinced her that no discovery had yet been made; and sighing deeply, she again turned her eyes on the searchers. At other times, the furious barking of the dogs, and the running of the people on foot towards the spot, seemed to promise some discovery; but the bursting out from the plantation of some unfortunate calf or sheep, showed that the people had been merely hastening to protect them from the unruly animals which had been brought together, and who, having straggled away from their masters, were under no control.

The day was now fast closing in, and the circle had become greatly diminished in extent; and when, in a short time afterwards, it had advanced on all sides from the plantations, and nothing but a small open space divided the people from each other, Sir George directed them to halt, and, after thanking them for what they had done, he requested them to rest themselves on the grass till refreshments could be brought from the Hermitage, after partaking of which they had best move homewards, as it seemed in vain to attempt anything more till next day. He then took leave of them, and hurried home to the Hermitage, from whence a number of people were soon seen returning with the promised refreshments.

Having finished what was set before them, and sufficiently rested themselves, most of them departed, having first declared their readiness to turn out the

moment they were wanted. But when his friends proposed to David Williams his returning home, he resolutely refused, declaring his determination to continue his search the whole night; and the poor man's distress seemed so great, that a number of the people agreed to accompany him. Robert, on being applied to, furnished them, from the Hermitage, with a quantity of torches and lanterns; and the people themselves, having got others from the cottages in the neighbourhood, divided into bands, and, fixing on John Maxwell's house for intelligence to be sent to, parted in different ways on their search.

At first all were extremely active, and no place the least suspicious was passed by; but as the night advanced their exertions evidently flagged, and many of them began to whisper to each other that it was in vain to expect doing any good in the midst of darkness; and, as the idea gained ground, the people gradually separated from each other, and returned to their homes, promising to be ready early in the morning to renew the search.

"An' now, David," said John Maxwell, "let's be gaun on."

"No to my house," cried David;—"not to my ain house. I canna face Matty, and them no found yet."

"Aweel, then," said John, "suppose ye gang hame wi' me, and fling yersel down for a wee; an' then we'll be ready to start again at gray daylight."

"An' what will Matty think in the meantime?" answered David. "But gang on, gang on, however," he added, "an' I'se follow ye."

John Maxwell, glad that he had got him this length, now led the way, occasionally making a remark to David, which was very briefly answered, so that John, seeing him in that mood, gave up speaking to him, till, coming at length to a bad step, and warning David of it, to which he got no answer, he hastily turned round and found that he was gone. He immediately went back, calling to David as loud as he could, but all to no purpose. It then occurred to him that David had probably changed his mind, and had gone homewards; and, at any rate, if he had taken another direction, that it was in vain for him to attempt following him, the light he carried being now nearly burnt out. He therefore made the best of his way to his own house.

In the meantime, poor David Williams, who could neither endure the thought of going to his own house nor to his brother-in-law's, and had purposely given him the slip, continued to wander up and down without well knowing where he was, or where he was going to, when he suddenly found himself, on coming out of the wood, close to the cottage inhabited by a widow named Elie Anderson.

"I wad gie the world for a drink o' water," said he to himself; "but the puir creature will hae lain down lang syne, an' I'm sweer to disturb her;" and as he said this, he listened at the door, and tried to see in at the window, but he could neither see nor hear anything, and was turning to go away, when he thought he saw something like the reflection of a light from a hole in the wall, on a tree which was opposite. It was too high for him to get at it without something to stand upon; but after searching about, he got part of an old hen-coop, and placing it to the side of the house, he mounted quietly on it. He now applied his eye to the hole where the light came through, and the first sight which met his horrified gaze was the body of his eldest daughter, lying on a table quite dead,—a large incision down her breast, and another across it!

David Williams could not tell how he forced his way into the house; but he remembered bolts and bars crashing before him,—his seizing Elie Anderson, and dashing her from him with all his

might; and that he was standing gazing on his murdered child when two young ones put out their hands from beneath the bed-clothes.

"There's faither," said the one.

"Oh, faither, faither," said the other, "but I'm glad ye're come, for Nanny's been crying sair, sair, an' she's a' bluiding."

David pressed them to his heart in a perfect agony, then catching them up in his arms, he rushed like a maniac from the place, and soon afterwards burst into John Maxwell's cottage,—his face pale, his eye wild, and gasping for breath.

"God be praised," cried John Maxwell, "the bairns are found! But where's Nanny?"

Poor David tried to speak, but could not articulate a word.

"Maybe ye couldna carry them a'?" said John; "but tell me whaur Nanny is, and I'se set out for her momently."

"Ye needna, John, ye needna," said David; "it's ower late, it's ower late!"

"How sae? how sae?" cried John; "surely naething mischancy has happened to the lassie?"

"John," said David, "grasping his hand, she's murdered—my bairn's murdered, John!"

"Gude preserve us a'," cried John; "an' wha's dune it?"

"Elie Anderson," answered David; "the poor innocent lies yonder a' cut to bits;" and the unhappy man broke into a passion of tears.

John Maxwell darted off to Saunders Wilson's. "Rise, Saunders!" cried he, thundering at the door; "haste ye and rise!"

"What's the matter now?" said Saunders.

"Elie Anderson's murdered David's Nanny; sae haste ye, rise, and yoke your cart, that we may tak her to the towbuith."

Up jumped Saunders Wilson, and up jumped his wife and his weans, and in a few minutes the story was spread like wildfire. Many a man had lain down so weary with the long search they had made, that nothing they thought would have tempted them to rise again; but now they and their families sprung from their beds, and hurried, many of them only half-dressed, to John Maxwell's, scarcely believing that the story could be true. Amongst the first came Geordie Turnbull, who proposed that a number of them should set off immediately, without waiting till Saunders Wilson was ready, as Elie Anderson might abscond in the meantime; and away he went, followed by about a dozen of the most active. They soon reached her habitation, where they found the door open and a light burning.

"Ay, ay," said Geordie, "she's aff, nae doubt, but we'll get her yet. Na, faith," cried he, entering, "she's here still; but, gudesake, what a sight's this!" continued he, gazing on the slaughtered child. The others now entered, and seemed filled with horror at what they saw.

"Haste ye," cried Geordie, "and fling a sheet or something ower her, that we mayna lose our wits a'thegither. And now, ye wretch," turning to Elie Anderson, "your life shall answer for this infernal deed. Here," continued he, "bring ropes and tie her, and whenever Saunders comes up, we'll off wi' her to the towbuith."

Ropes were soon got, and she was tied roughly enough, and then thrown carelessly into the cart; but notwithstanding the pain occasioned by her thigh-bone being broken by the force with which David Williams dashed her to the ground, she answered not one word to all their threats and reproaches, till the cart coming on some very uneven ground, occasioned her such exquisite pain, that, losing all command over herself, she broke out into such a torrent of abuse against those who surrounded her, that Geordie Turnbull

would have killed her on the spot, had they not prevented him by main force.

Shortly afterwards they arrived at the prison; and having delivered her to the jailor, with many strict charges to keep her safe, they immediately returned to assist in the search for the bodies of the other children, who, they had no doubt, would be found in or about her house.

When they arrived there, they found an immense crowd assembled, for the story had spread everywhere; and all who had lost children, accompanied by their friends and neighbours and acquaintances, had repaired to the spot, and had already commenced digging and searching all round. After working in this way for a long while, without any discovery being made, it was at length proposed to give up the search and return home, when Robin Galt, who was a mason, and who had been repeatedly pacing the ground from the kitchen to the pig-sty, and from the pig-sty to the kitchen, said, "Frien's, I've been considering, and I canna help thinking that there maun be a space no discovered atween the sty and the kitchen, an' I'm unco fond to hae that ascertained."

"We'll sune settle that," says Geordie Turnbull. "Whereabouts should it be?"

"Just there, I think," says Robin.

Geordie immediately drove a stone or two out, so that he could get his hand in.

"Does onybody see my hand frae the kitchen?" asked he.

"No a bit o't," was the answer.

"Nor frae the sty?"

"Nor frae that either."

"Then there maun be a space, sure enough," cried Geordie, drawing out one stone after another, till he had made a large hole in the wall. "An' now," said he, "gie me a light;" and he shoved in a lantern, and looked into the place. "The Lord preserve us a'!" cried he, starting back.

"What is't—what is't?" cried the people, pressing forward on all sides.

"Look an' see!—look an' see!" he answered; "they're a' there—a' the murdered weans are there, lying in a raw!"

The wall was torn down in a moment; and, as he had said, the bodies of the poor innocents were found laid side by side together. Those who entered first gazed on the horrid scene without speaking, and then proceeded to carry out the bodies, and to lay them on the green before the house. It was then that the grief of the unhappy parents broke forth; and their cries and lamentations, as they recognised their murdered little ones, roused the passions of the crowd to absolute frenzy.

"Hanging's ower gude for her," cried one.

"Let's rive her to coupens," exclaimed another.

A universal shout was the answer; and immediately the greater part of them set off for the prison, their numbers increasing as they ran, and all burning with fury against the unhappy author of so much misery.

The wretched woman was at this moment sitting with an old crony who had been admitted to see her, and to whom she was confessing what had influenced her in acting as she had done.

"Ye ken," said she, "I haena jist been mysel since a rascal that had a grudge at me put aboot a story of my having made awa wi' John Anderson, wi' the help o' arsenic. I was ta'en up and examined aboot it, and afterwards tried for it, and though I was acquitted, the neebours aye looked on me wi' an evil eye, and avoided me. This drave me to drinking and other bad courses, and it ended in my leaving that part of the kintra, and coming here. But the thing rankled in my mind, and many

a time hae I sat thinkin' on it, till I scarcely kent where I was, or what I was doing. Weel, ae day, as I was sitting at the roadside, near the Hermitage, and very low about it, I heard a voice say, 'Are you thinking on John Anderson, Elie? Ay, woman,' said Charlotte Beaumont, for it was her, 'what a shame in you to poison your own gudeman!' and she pointed her finger, and hissed at me. When I heard that," continued Elie, "the whole blood in my body seemed to flee up to my face, an' my very een were like to start frae my head; an' I believe I wad hae killed her on the spot, hadna ane o' Sir George's servants come up at the time; sae I sat mysel doun again, an' after a lang while, I reasoned mysel, as I thought, into the notion that I shouldna mind what a bairn said; but I hadna forgotten't for a' that.

"Weel, ae day that I met wi' her near the wood, I tell't her that it wasna right in her to speak yon gate, an' didna mean to say ony mair, hadna the lassie gane on ten times waur nor she had done before, and sae angered me, that I gied her a wee bit shake, and then she threatened me wi' what her faither wad do, and misca'ed me sae sair, that I struck her, and my passion being ance up, I gaed on striking her till I killed her outright. I didna ken for a while that she was dead; but when I found that it was really sae, I had sense enough left to row her in my apron, an' to tak her hame wi' me; an' when I had barred the door, I laid her body on a chair, and sat down on my knees beside it, an' grat an' wrung my hands a' night lang.

"Then I began to think what would be done to me if it was found out; an' thought o' pittin' her into a cunning place, which the man who had the house before me, and who was a great poacher, had contrived to hide his game in; and when that was done, I was a thought easier, though I couldna forgie mysel for what I had done, till it cam into my head that it had been the means o' saving her frae sin, and frae haein' muckle to answer for; an' this thought made me unco happy. At last I began to think that it would be right to save mair o' them, and that it would atone for a' my former sins; an' this took sic a hold o' me, that I was aye on the watch to get some ane or ither o' them by themselves, to dedicate them to their Maker, by marking their bodies wi' the holy cross:—but oh!" she groaned, "if I hae been wrang in a' this!"

The sound of the people rushing towards the prison was now distinctly heard; and both at once seemed to apprehend their object.

"Is there no way of escape, Elie," asked her friend, wringing her hands.

Elie pointed to her broken thigh, and shook her head. "Besides," said she, "I know my hour is come."

The mob had now reached the prison, and immediately burst open the doors. Ascending to the room where Elie was confined, they seized her by the hair, and dragged her furiously downstairs. They then hurried her to the river, and, with the bitterest curses, plunged her into the stream; but their intention was not so soon accomplished as they had expected; and one of the party having exclaimed that a witch would not drown, it was suggested, and unanimously agreed to, to burn her. A fire was instantly lighted by the waterside, and when they thought it was sufficiently kindled, they threw her into the midst of it. For some time her wet clothes protected her, but when the fire began to scorch her, she made a strong exertion, and rolled herself off. She was immediately siezed and thrown on again; but having again succeeded in rolling herself off, the mob became furious, and called for more wood for the fire; and by stirring it on all hands, they raised it into a tremendous blaze.

Some of the most active now hastened to lay hold of the poor wretch, and to toss her into it; but in their hurry one of them having trod on her broken limb, caused her such excessive pain, that when Geordie Turnbull stooped to assist in lifting her head, she suddenly caught him by the thumb with her teeth, and held him so fast, that he found it impossible to extricate it. She was therefore laid down again, and in many ways tried to force open her mouth, but without other effect than increasing Geordie's agony; till at length one of them seizing a pointed stick from the fire, and thrusting it into an aperture occasioned by the loss of some of her teeth, the pressure of its sharp point against the roof of her mouth, and the smoke setting her coughing, forced her to relax her hold, when the man's thumb was got out of her grasp terribly lacerated. Immediately thereafter she was tossed in the midst of the flames, and forcibly held there by means of long prongs; and the fire soon reaching the vital parts, the poor wretch's screams and imprecations became so horrifying, that one of the bystanders, unable to bear it any longer, threw a large stone at her head, which, hitting her on the temples, deprived her of sense and motion.

Their vengeance satisfied, the people immediately dispersed, having first pledged themselves to the strictest secrecy. Most of them returned home, but a few went back to Elie Anderson's, whose house, and everything belonging to her, had been set on fire by the furious multitude. They then retired, leaving a few men to watch the remains of the children, till coffins could be procured for them. "Never in a' my days," said John Maxwell, when speaking of it afterwards, "did I weary for daylight as I did that night. When the smoke smothered the fire, and it was quite dark, we didna mind sae muckle; but when a rafter or a bit o' the roof fell in, and a bleeze raise, then the firelight shining on the ghastly faces of the puir wee innocents a' laid in a row,—it was mair than we could weel stand; and it was mony a day or I was my ainsel again."

Chapter III.

Next morning the parents met, and it being agreed that all their little ones should be interred in one grave, and that the funeral should take place on the following day, the necessary preparations were accordingly made. In the meantime, Matty went over to her brother John Maxwell, to tell him, if possible, to persuade David Williams not to attend the funeral, as she was sure he could not stand it. "He hadna closed his ee," she said, "since that terrible night, and had neither ate nor drank, but had just wandered up and down between the house and the fields, moaning as if his heart would break." John Maxwell promised to speak to David, but when he did so, he found him so determined on attending, that it was needless to say any more on the subject.

On the morning of the funeral, David Williams appeared very composed; and John Maxwell was saying to some of the neighbours that he thought he would be quite able to attend, when word was brought that Geordie Turnbull had died that morning of lock-jaw, brought on, it was supposed, as much from the idea of his having been bitten by a witch, or one that was not canny, as from the injury done to him.

This news made an evident impression on David Williams, and he became so restless and uneasy, and felt himself so unwell, that he at one time

declared he would not go to the funeral; but getting afterwards somewhat more composed, he joined the melancholy procession, and conducted himself with firmness and propriety from the time of their setting out till all the coffins were lowered into the grave. But the first spadeful of earth was scarcely thrown in, when the people were startled by his breaking into a long and loud laugh;—

"There she's!—there she's!" he exclaimed; and, darting through the astonished multitude, he made with all his speed to the gate of the churchyard.

"Oh! stop him,—will naebody stop him?" cried his distracted wife; and immediately a number of his friends and acquaintances set off after him, the remainder of the people crowding to the churchyard wall, whence there was an extensive view over the surrounding country. But quickly as those ran who followed him, David Williams kept far ahead of them, terror lending him wings,—till at length, on slackening his pace, William Russel, who was the only one near, gained on him, and endeavoured, by calling in a kind and soothing manner, to prevail on him to return. This only made him increase his speed, and William would have been thrown behind farther than ever, had he not taken a short cut, which brought him very near him.

"Thank God, he will get him now!" cried the people in the churchyard; when David Williams, turning suddenly to the right, made with the utmost speed towards a rising ground, at the end of which was a freestone quarry of great depth. At this sight a cry of horror arose from the crowd, and most fervently did they pray that he might yet be overtaken; and great was their joy when they saw that, by the most wonderful exertion, William Russel had got up so near as to stretch out his arm to catch him; but at that instant his foot slipped, and ere he could recover himself, the unhappy man, who had now gained the summit, loudly shouting, sprung into the air.

"God preserve us!" cried the people, covering their eyes that they might not see a fellow-creature dashed in pieces; "it is all over!"

"Then help me to lift his poor wife," said Isabel Lawson. "And now stan' back, and gie her a' the air, that she may draw her breath."

"She's drawn her last breath already, I'm doubting," said Janet Ogilvie, an old skilful woman; and her fears were found to be too true.

"An' what will become o' the poor orphans?" said Isabel.

She had scarcely spoken, when Sir George Beaumont advanced, and, taking one of the children in each hand, he motioned the people to return towards the grave.

"The puir bairns are provided for now," whispered one to another, as they followed to witness the completion of the mournful ceremony. It was hastily finished in silence, and Sir George having said a few words to his steward, and committed the orphans to his care, set out on his way to the Hermitage, the assembled multitude all standing uncovered as he passed, to mark their respect for his goodness and humanity.

As might have been expected, the late unhappy occurrences greatly affected Lady Beaumont's health, and Sir George determined to quit the Hermitage for a time; and directions were accordingly given to prepare for their immediate removal. While this was doing, the friend who had been with Elie Anderson in the prison happened to call at the Hermitage, and the servants crowded about her, eager to learn what had induced Elie to commit such crimes. When she had repeated what Elie had said, a young woman, one of the servants, exclaimed, "I know

who's been the cause of this; for if Bet,"——and she suddenly checked herself.

"That must mean Betsy Pringle," said Robert, who was her sweetheart, and indeed engaged to her; "so you will please let us hear what you have to say against her, or own that you're a slanderer."

"I have no wish to make mischief," said the servant; "and as what I said came out without much thought, I would rather say no more; but I'll not be called a slanderer neither."

"Then say what you have to say," cried Robert; "it's the only way to settle the matter."

"Well, then," said she, "since I must do it, I shall. Soon after I came here, I was one day walking with the bairns and Betsy Pringle, when we met a woman rather oddly dressed, and who had something queer in her manner, and, when she had left us, I asked Betsy who it was. 'Why,' said Betsy, 'I don't know a great deal about her, as she comes from another part of the country; but if what a friend of mine told me lately is true, this Elie Anderson, as they call her, should have been hanged.'

"'Hanged!' cried Miss Charlotte; 'and why should she be hanged, Betsy?'

"'Never you mind, Miss Charlotte,' said Betsy, 'I'm speaking to Fanny here.'

"'You can tell me some other time,' said I.

"'Nonsense,' cried Betsy, 'what can a bairn know about it? Weel,' continued she, 'it was believed that she had made away with John Anderson, her gudeman.'

"'What's a gudeman, Betsy?' asked Miss Charlotte.

"'A husband,' answered she.

"'And what's making away with him, Betsy?'

"'What need you care?' said Betsy.

"'You may just as well tell me,' said Miss Charlotte; 'or I'll ask Elie Anderson herself all about it, the first time I meet her.'

"'That would be a good joke,' said Betsy, laughing; 'how Elie Anderson would look to hear a bairn like you speaking about a gudeman, and making away with him; however,' she continued, 'that means killing him.'

"'Killing him!' exclaimed Miss Charlotte. 'Oh, the wretch; and how did she kill him, Betsy?'

"'You must ask no more questions, miss,' said Betsy, and the subject dropped.

"'Betsy,' said I to her afterwards, you should not have mentioned these things before the children; do you forget how noticing they are?'

"'Oh, so they are,' said Betsy, but only for the moment; and I'll wager Miss Charlotte has forgotten it all already.'

"But, poor thing," Fanny added, she remembered it but too well.'"

"I'll not believe this," cried Robert.

"Let Betsy be called, then," said the housekeeper, "and we'll soon get at the truth." Betsy came, was questioned by the housekeeper, and acknowledged the fact.

"Then," said Robert, "you have murdered my master's daughter, and you and I can never be more to one another than we are at this moment;" and he hastily left the room.

Betsy gazed after him for an instant, and then fell on the floor. She was immediately raised up and conveyed to bed, but recovering soon after, and expressing a wish to sleep, her attendant left her. The unhappy woman, feeling herself unable to face her mistress after what had happened, immediately got up, and, jumping from the window, fled from the Hermitage. The first accounts they had of her were contained in a letter from herself to Lady Beaumont, written on her death-bed.

wherein she described the miserable life she had led since quitting the Hermitage, and entreating her ladyship's forgiveness for the unhappiness which she had occasioned.

"Let what has happened," said Lady Beaumont, "be a warning to those who have the charge of them, to *beware of what they say before children*;—a sentiment which Sir George considered as so just and important, that he had it engraven on the stone which covered the little innocents, that their fate and its cause might be had in everlasting remembrance."—"*The Odd Volume.*"

AN ORKNEY WEDDING.

By John Malcolm.

To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.—*Goldsmith.*

Gentle reader! you, I doubt not, have seen many strange sights, and have passed through a variety of eventful scenes. Perhaps you have visited the Thames Tunnel, and there threaded your way under ground and under water, or you may have witnessed Mr Green's balloon ascent, and seen him take an airing on horseback among the clouds.

Perhaps, too, you have been an observer of human life in all its varieties and extremes: one night figuring away at Almack's with aristocratic beauty, and the next footing it with a band of gipsies in Epping Forest. But, pray tell me, have you ever seen an Orkney Wedding? If not, as I have just received an invitation to one, inclusive of a friend, you shall, if it so please you, accompany me to that scene of rural hospitality.

In conformity with the custom of the country, I have sent off to the young couple a pair of fowls and a leg of mutton, to play their parts upon the festive board; and as every family contributes in like manner, a general pic-nic is formed, which considerably diminishes the expense incident to the occasion; although, as the festivities are frequently kept up for three or four days by a numerous assemblage of rural beauty and fashion, the young people must contrive to live upon love, if they can, during the first year of their union, having little else left upon which to subsist, except the fragments of the mighty feast.

Well, then, away we go, and about noon approach the scene of festivity,—a country-seat built in the cottage style, thatched with straw, and flanked with a barn and a well-filled corn-yard, enclosed with a turf-dyke.

The wedding company are now seen making their way towards the place of rendezvous; and the young women, arrayed in white robes of emblematic purity, exhibit a most edifying example of economy. With their upper garments carried to a height to which the fashion of short petticoats never reached even at Paris, they trip it away barefooted through the mud, until they reach the banks of a purling stream, about a quarter of a mile distant from the wedding-house. Here their feet, having been previously kissed by the crystal waters, and covered with cotton stockings, which in whiteness would fain vie with the skin they enviously conceal,

are inserted into shoes, in whose mirror of glossy black the enamoured youth obtains a peep of his own charms, while stooping down to adjust their ties into a love-knot.

Immediately in front of the outer-door, or principal entrance of the house, and answering the double purpose of shelter and ornament, stands a broad square pile, compósed of the most varied materials, needless to be enumerated, and vulgarly denominated a *midden*, around the base of which some half-dozen of pigs are acting the part of miners, in search of its hidden treasures. It is separated from the house by a sheet of water, tinged with the fairest hues of heaven and earth, viz., blue and green, and over which we pass by a bridge of stepping-stones.

And now, my friend, before entering the house, it may be as well to consider what character you are to personate during the entertainment; for the good people in these islands, like their neighbours of the mainland of Scotland, take that friendly interest in other people's affairs, which the thankless world very unkindly denominates impertinent curiosity.

If I pass you off as a lawyer, you will immediately be overwhelmed with statements of their quarrels and grievances; for they are main fond of law, and will expend the hard-earned savings of years in litigation, although the subject-matter of dispute should happen to be only a goose. You must not, therefore, belong to the bar, since, in the present case, consultations would produce no fees.

I think I shall therefore confer upon you the degree of M.D., which will do as well for the occasion as if you had obtained it by purchase at the University of Aberdeen; although I am not sure that it also may not subject you to some trouble in the way of medical advice.

And now having safely passed over the puddle, and tapped gently at the door, our arrival is immediately announced by a grand musical chorus, produced by the barking of curs, the cackling of geese, the quacking of ducks, and the grunting and squeaking of pigs. After this preliminary salutation, we are received by the bridegroom, and ushered, with many kind welcomes, into the principal hall, through a half open door, at one end of which we are refreshed with a picture of rural felicity, namely, some sleek-looking cows, *ruminating* in philosophical tranquillity on the subject of diet.

In the middle of the hall is a large blazing turf fire, the smoke of which escapes in part through an aperture in the roof, while the remainder expands in the manner of a pavilion over the heads of the guests.

A door at the other end of the hall opens into the withdrawing-room, the principal furniture of which consists of two large chests filled with oat and barley meal and home-made cheeses, a concealed bed, and a chest of drawers. Both rooms have floors inlaid with earth, and roofs of a dark soot colour, from which drops of a corresponding hue occasionally fall upon the bridal robes of the ladies, with all the fine effect arising from contrast, and ornamental on the principle of the patch upon the cheek of beauty.

Separated from the dwelling-house only by a puddle dotted with stepping-stones stands the barn, which, from its length and breadth, is admirably adapted for the purposes of a ball-room.

Upon entering the withdrawing-room, which the good people with admirable modesty call *the ben*, we take our seats among the elders and chiefs of the people, and drink to the health of the young couple in a glass of delicious Hollands, which, unlike Macbeth's "Amen," does not stick in our throats, although we are well aware that it never paid duty, but was slily smuggled over sea in a Dutch lugger, and safely stowed,

during some dark night, in the caves of the more remote islands.

The clergyman having now arrived, the company assembled, and the ceremony of marriage being about to take place, the parties to be united walk in, accompanied by the best man and the bride's maid,—those important functionaries, whose business it is to pull off the gloves from the right hands of their constituents, as soon as the order is given to "join hands,"—but this they find to be no easy matter, for at that eventful part of the ceremony their efforts are long baffled, owing to the tightness of the gloves. While they are tugging away to no purpose, the bridegroom looks chagrined, and the bride is covered with blushes; and when at last the operation is accomplished, and perseverance crowned with success, the confusion of the scene seems to have infected the parson, who thus blunders through the ceremony:

"Bridegroom," quoth he, "do you take the woman whom you now hold by the hand, to be your lawful married husband?"

To which interrogation the bridegroom having nodded in the affirmative, the parson perceives his mistake, and calls out, "Wife, I mean." "Wife, I mean," echoes the bridegroom; and the whole company are in a titter.

But, thank heaven, the affair is got over at last; and the bride being well saluted, a large rich cake is broken over her head, the fragments of which are the subject of a scramble among the bystanders, by whom they are picked up as precious relics, having power to produce love-dreams.

And now the married pair, followed by the whole company, set off to church, to be *kirked*, as the phrase is. A performer on the violin (not quite a Rossini) heads the procession, and plays a variety of appropriate airs, until he reaches the church-door. As soon as the party have entered and taken their seats, the parish-clerk, in a truly impressive and orthodox tone of voice, reads a certain portion of Scripture, wherein wives are enjoined to be obedient to their husbands. The service is concluded with a psalm, and the whole party march back, headed as before by the musician.

Upon returning from church, the company partake of a cold collation, called the *hansel*, which is distributed to each and all by the bride's mother, who for the time obtains the elegant designation of *hansel-wife*. The refreshments consist of cheese, old and new, cut down in large slices, or rather junks, and placed upon oat and barley cakes,—some of the former being about an inch thick, and called *snoddies*.

These delicate viands are washed down with copious libations of new ale, which is handed about in a large wooden vessel, having three handles, and ycleped a *three-lugged cog*.* The etherial beverage is seasoned with pepper, ginger, and nutmeg, and thickened with eggs and pieces of toasted biscuit.

These preliminaries being concluded, the company return to the barn, where the music strikes up, and the dancing commences with what is called the Bride's Reel; after which, two or three young men take possession of the floor, which they do not resign until they have danced with every woman present; they then give place to others, who pass through the same ordeal, and so on. The dance then becomes more varied and general. Old men and young ones, maids, matrons, and grandmothers, mingle in its mazes. And, oh! what movements are there,—what freaks of the "fantastic toe,"—what goodly figures and glorious gambols in a dance;—compared to which the waltz is but the shadow of joy, and the quadrille the feeble effort of Mirth upon her last legs.

Casting an eye, however, upon the

* Also called *the Bride's cog*.—ED.

various performers, I cannot but observe that the old people seem to have monopolised all the airs and graces; for, while the young maidens slide through the reel in the most quiet and unostentatious way, and then keep bobbing opposite to their partners in all the monotony of the back-step, their more gifted grandmothers figure away in quite another style. With a length of waist which our modern belles do not wish to possess, and an under-figure, which they cannot if they would, even with the aid of pads, but which is nevertheless the true court-shape, rendering the hoop unnecessary, and which is moreover increased by the swinging appendages of huge scarlet pockets, stuffed with bread and cheese, behold them sideling up to their partners in a kind of *echellon* movement, spreading out their petticoats like sails, and then, as if seized with a sudden fit of bashfulness, making a hasty retreat rearwards. Back they go at a round trot; and seldom do they stop until their career of retiring modesty ends in a somersault over the sitters along the sides of the room.

The old men, in like manner, possess similar advantages over the young ones; the latter being sadly inferior to their seniors in address and attitudes. Nor is this much to be wondered at, the young gentlemen having passed most of their summer vacations at Davis' Straits, where their society consisted chiefly of bears; whereas the old ones are men of the world, having in early life entered the Company's service (I do not mean that of the East Indies, but of Hudson's Bay), where their manners must no doubt have been highly polished by their intercourse with the Squaws, and all the beauty and fashion of that interesting country.

Such of them as have sojourned there are called north-westers, and are distinguished by that modest assurance, and perfect ease and self-possession, only to be acquired by mixing frequently and freely with the best society. Indeed, one would suppose that their manners were formed upon the model of the old French school; and *queues* are in general use among them—not, however, those of the small pigtail kind, but ones which in shape and size strongly resemble the Boulogne sausage.

And now, amidst these ancients, I recognise my old and very worthy friend, Mr James Houston, kirk-officer and sexton of the parish, of whom a few words, perhaps, may not be unacceptable.

His degree of longitude may be about five feet from the earth, and in latitude he may extend at an average to about three. His countenance, which is swarthy, and fully as broad as it is long, although not altogether the model which an Italian painter would select for his Apollo, would yet be considered handsome among the Esquimaux; or, as James calls them, the *Huskinese*. His hair, which (notwithstanding an age at which Time generally saves us the expense of the powder-tax) is jet black, is of a length and strength that would not shrink from comparison with that of a horse's tail, and hangs down over his broad shoulders in a fine and generous flow. The coat which he wears upon this, as upon all other occasions, is cut upon the model of the spencer; its colour, a "heavenly blue," varied by numerous dark spots, like clouds in a summer sky; while his nether bulk is embraced by a pair of tight buckskin "unmentionables."

Extending from the bosom down to the knee he wears a leather apron. This part of his dress is never dispensed with, except at church; and though I have not been able to ascertain its precise purpose with perfect certainty, I am inclined to think it is used as a perpetual pinafore, to preserve his garments from the pollution of soup and grease-drops at table.

The principal materials of his dress are, moreover, prepared for use by his own hands: Mr Houston being at once sole proprietor and operative of a small manufactory, consisting of a single loom; when not employed at which, or in spreading the couch of rest in the churchyard, he enjoys a kind of perpetual *otium cum dignitate*.

His chief moveables, in addition to the loom, consist of three Shetland ponies and a small Orkney plough, by the united aid of which he is enabled to scratch up the surface of a small estate, which supplies him with grain sufficient for home consumption, but not for exportation.

His peculiar and more shining accomplishments consist in the art of mimicking the dance of every man and woman in the parish, which he does with a curious felicity, and in executing short pieces of music on that sweetest of lyres, the Jew's harp.

Like most of his profession, he is a humorist; and though he has long "walked hand-in-hand with death," nobody enjoys life with a keener relish at the festive board or the midnight ball, which he finds delightful relaxations from his *grave* occupations during the day; and yet even these latter afford him a rare and consolatory joy denied to other men,—I mean that of meeting with his old friends, after they have been long dead, and of welcoming, with a grin of recognition, the skulls of his early associates, as he playfully pats them with his spade, and tosses them into the light of day.

But it is in his capacity of kirk-officer that Mr Houston appears to the greatest advantage, while ushering the clergyman to the pulpit, and marching before him with an air truly magnificent, and an erectness of carriage somewhat beyond the perpendicular, he performs his important function of opening and shutting the door of the pulpit, and takes his seat under an almost overwhelming sense of dignity, being for the time a kind of lord high constable, with whom is entrusted the execution of the law. And that he does not bear the sword in vain is known to their cost, by all the litigious and church-going dogs of the parish; for no sooner do they begin to growl and tear each other, with loud yells, which they generally do, so as to chime in with the first notes of the first psalm, than starting up with a long staff,—the awe-inspiring baton of office,—he belabours the yelping curs with such blessed effect as to restore them to a sense of propriety, and prevent them from mingling their unhallowed chorus with that of the melodious choir.

Having given this brief outline of Mr Houston, we shall proceed through the remaining part of the scene. A large and very substantial dinner forms an agreeable variety in the entertainments of the day; and in the evening the scene of elegant conviviality is transferred to the ball-room, where dancing again commences with renovated spirit. The perpetual motion, also, seems at last to be discovered in that of the *three-lugged cog*, which circulates unceasing as the sun;—like that, diffusing life and gladness in its growing orbit round the room, and kissed in its course by so many fair lips, bears off upon its edges much of their balmy dew, affording a double-refined relish to its inspiring draughts.

At length the supper is announced, and a rich repast it is: quarters of mutton, boiled and roasted, flocks of fat hens, in marshalled ranks, flanked with roasted geese, luxuriously swimming in a savoury sea of butter, form the *élite* of the feast; from which all manner of vegetables are entirely excluded, being considered as much too humble for such an occasion.

The company do ample justice to the hospitality of their entertainers; and even the bride, considering the delicacy of her situation, has already exceeded

all bounds of moderation. This, however, is entirely owing to her high sense of politeness; for she conceives that it would be rude in her to decline eating so long as she is asked to do so by the various carvers. But now I really begin to be alarmed for her: already has she dispatched six or seven services of animal food, and is even now essaying to disjoint the leg and wing of a goose; but, thank Heaven!—in attempting to cut through the bone, she has upset her plate, and transferred its contents into her lap; which circumstance, I trust, she will consider a providential warning to eat no more.

And now, before leaving the wedding, we will have a little conversation with some of my country friends, who are fond of chatting with those whom they call *the gentry;* and who, being particularly partial to a pompous phraseology, and addicted to the use of words, of which they either do not understand the meaning at all, or very imperfectly, are all of the Malaprop school, and often quite untranslatable. A fair specimen of their style may be had from my friend Magnus Isbister, who has taken his seat upon my left hand, but at such a distance from the table that his victuals are continually dropping betwixt his plate and his mouth. I will speak to him.

"I am glad to see you here, Magnus; and looking so well, that I need not inquire after your health."

Magnus. "Why, thanks to the Best, sir, I'm brave and easy that way; but sairly hadden down wi' the laird, wha's threatenin' to raise my rent that's ower high already; but he was aye a *raxward* man,—and, between you and me, he's rather greedy."

"That's a hard case, Magnus; you should speak to the factor, and explain your circumstances to him."

Mag. "Oh, sir, I hae been doin' that already; but he got into a *sevandable* passion, an' said something about 'his eye and Betty Martin;'—I'm sure I ken naething about her; but ye maun ken he's a *felonious* arguer, an' ower deep for the like o' us puir *infidel bodies.*"

"Had you not better sit nearer to the table, Magnus? You are losing your victuals by keeping at such a distance."

Mag. "Na, na, sir; I doubt ye're mockan' me noo; but I ken what gude manners is better than do ony siccan a thing."

"Where is your son at present?"

Mag. "Why, thanks be praised, sir, he's doing bravely. He follows the *swindling* trade awa in the south, whaur they tell me the great Bishops o' Lunnon are proclaiming war wi' the Papists."

"That they are, Magnus, and ever will do."

Mag. "Can ye tell me, sir, if it's true that the king's intending to part wi' his ministers? I'm thinking it would be a' the better for the like o' us boons folk, and wad free us frae the tithes."

"You misunderstand the thing, Magnus; the king's ministers are not those of the Church, but of the State."

Mag. "Oh—is that it? Weel, I never kent that before. But can ye tell me, sir, wha that gentleman is upon your ither side?"

"He is a young Englishman, who has come north to see this country."

Mag. "Is he indeed, sir? And, by your leave, what *ack o' parliament* does he drive?"

"He is, I believe, a doctor of medicine."

Mag. "Just so, sir; I wonder if he could tell what would be good for me?"

"I thought you told me you were in good health?"

Mag. "Weel, as I said before, I'm brave and easy that way, indeed; but yet I'm whiles fashed wi' the *rheumaticisms*, and sometimes I'm very *domalis.*"

"Domalis!—what's that, Magnus?"

Mag. "Weel, never might there be the waur o' that; I thought you, that's been at college, wad hae kent that; —domalis is just '*flamp*' (listless)."

"I would advise you to keep clear of the doctors, Magnus; believe me, you don't require them at present;—but come, favour me with a toast."

Mag. (*Filling his glass.*) "Weel, sir, I'se do my best to gie ye a gude ane (*scratching his head*);—weel, sir, 'Here's luck.'"

"An excellent toast, Magnus, which I drink with all my heart; and, in return 'Here's to your health and happiness, and that of the bride and bridegroom, and the rest of this pleasant company, and a good night to you all.'"

THE GHOST WITH THE GOLDEN CASKET.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

Is my soul tamed
And baby-rid with the thought that flood or field
Can render back, to scare men and the moon,
The airy shapes of the corses they enwomb?
And what if 'tis so—shall I lose the crown
Of my most golden hope, 'cause its fair circle
Is haunted by a shadow?

FROM the coast of Cumberland the beautiful old castle of Caerlaverock is seen standing on the point of a fine green promontory, bounded by the river Nith on one side, by the deep sea on another, by the almost impassable morass of Solway on a third; while, far beyond, you observe the three spires of Dumfries, and the high green hills of Dalswinton and Keir. It was formerly the residence of the almost princely names of Douglas, Seaton, Kirkpatrick, and Maxwell: it is now the dwelling-place of the hawk and the owl; its courts are a lair for cattle, and its walls afford a midnight shelter to the passing smuggler, or, like those of the city doomed in Scripture, are places for the fishermen to dry their nets. Between this fine old ruin and the banks of the Nith, at the foot of a grove of pines, and within a stone-cast of tide-mark, the remains of a rude cottage are yet visible to the curious eye; the bramble and the wild plum have in vain tried to triumph over the huge gray granite blocks, which composed the foundations of its walls. The vestiges of a small garden may still be traced, more particularly in summer, when roses and lilies, and other relics of its former beauty, begin to open their bloom, clinging, amid the neglect and desolation of the place, with something like human affection, to the soil. This rustic ruin presents no attractions to the eye of the profound antiquary, compared to those of its more stately companion, Caerlaverock Castle; but with this rude cottage and its garden, tradition connects a tale so wild and so moving, as to elevate it, in the contemplation of the peasantry, above all the princely feasts and feudal atrocities of its neighbour.

It is now some fifty years since I visited the parish of Caerlaverock; but the memory of its people, its scenery, and the story of the Ghost with the Golden Casket, are as fresh with me as matters of yesterday. I had walked out to the river bank one sweet afternoon of July, when the fishermen were hastening to dip their nets in the coming tide, and the broad waters of the Solway sea were swelling and leaping against bank and cliff, as far as the eye could reach. It was studded over with boats, and its more unfrequented bays were white with water-fowl. I sat down on a small grassy mound between the cottage ruins and the old garden plot, and gazed, with all the hitherto untasted pleasure of a stranger, on the beautiful scene before me. On the right, and beyond the river, the mouldering relics of the ancient religion of Scotland ascended, in unassimilating beauty, above the humble kirk of New Abbey and its squalid village; farther to the south rose the white sharp cliffs of Barnhourie; while on the left stood the ancient Keeps of Cumlongan and Torthorald, and the Castle of Caerlaverock. Over the whole looked the stately green mountain of Criffel, confronting its more stately but less beautiful neighbour, Skiddaw; while between them flowed the deep wide sea of Solway, hemmed with cliff, and castle, and town.

As I sat looking on the increasing multitudes of waters, and watching the success of the fishermen, I became aware of the approach of an old man, leading, as one will conduct a dog in a string, a fine young milch cow, in a halter of twisted hair, which, passing through the ends of two pieces of flat wood, fitted to the animal's cheek-bones, pressed her nose, and gave her great pain whenever she became disobedient. The cow seemed willing to enjoy the luxury of a browse on the rich pasture which surrounded the little ruined cottage; but in this humble wish she was not to be indulged; for the aged owner, coiling up the tether, and seizing her closely by the head, conducted her past the tempting herbage towards a small and close-cropt hillock, a good stone-cast distant. In this piece of self-denial the animal seemed reluctant to sympathise — she snuffed the fresh green pasture, and plunged, and startled, and nearly broke away. What the old man's strength seemed nearly unequal to was accomplished by speech:—

"Bonnie leddy, bonnie leddy," said he, in a soothing tone, "it canna be, it maunna be; hinnie! hinnie! what would become of my three-bonnie grandbairns, made fatherless and mitherless by that false flood afore us, if they supped milk, and tasted butter, that came from the greensward of this doomed and unblessed spot?"

The animal appeared to comprehend something in her own way from the speech of her owner: she abated her resistance; and, indulging only in a passing glance at the rich deep herbage, passed on to her destined pasture.

I had often heard of the singular superstitions of the Scottish peasantry, and that every hillock had its song, every hill its ballad, and every valley its tale. I followed with my eye the old man and his cow: he went but a little way, till, seating himself on the ground, retaining still the tether in his hand, he said,—

"Now, bonnie leddy, feast thy fill on this good greensward; it is halesome and holy, compared to the sward at the doomed cottage of auld Gibbie Gyrape—leave that to smugglers' nags: Willie o' Brandyburn and roaring Jock o' Kempstane will ca' the Haunted Ha' a hained bit—they are godless fearnoughts."

I looked at the person of the peasant. He was a stout hale old man, with a weather-beaten face, furrowed something by time, and perhaps by sorrow. Though summer was at its warmest, he

wore a broad chequered mantle, fastened at the bosom with a skewer of steel; a broad bonnet, from beneath the circumference of which straggled a few thin locks, as white as driven snow, shining like amber, and softer than the finest flax; while his legs were warmly cased in blue-ribbed boot-hose. Having laid his charge to the grass, he looked leisurely around him, and espying me,—a stranger, and dressed above the manner of the peasantry,—he acknowledged my presence by touching his bonnet; and, as if willing to communicate something of importance, he struck the tethered stake in the ground and came to the old garden fence.

Wishing to know the peasant's reason for avoiding the ruins, I thus addressed him:—

"This is a pretty spot, my aged friend, and the herbage looks so fresh and abundant, that I would advise thee to bring thy charge hither; and while she continues to browse, I would gladly listen to the history of thy white locks, for they seem to have been bleached in many tempests."

"Ay, ay," said the peasant, shaking his white head with a grave smile; "they have braved sundry tempests between sixteen and sixty; but touching this pasture, sir, I know of none who would like their cows to crop it: the aged cattle shun the place;—the bushes bloom, but bear no fruit,—the birds never build in the branches,—the children never come near to play,—and the aged never choose it for a resting-place; but, pointing it out as they pass to the young, tell them the story of its desolation. Sae ye see, sir, having nae gude-will to such a spot of earth myself, I like little to see a stranger sitting in such an unblessed place; and I would as good as advise ye to come ower wi' me to the cowslip knoll—there are reasons mony that an honest man shouldna sit there."

I arose at once, and seating myself beside the peasant on the cowslip knoll, desired to know something of the history of the spot from which he had just warned me. The old man looked on me with an air of embarrassment.

"I am just thinking," said he, "that, as ye are an Englishman, I shouldna acquaint ye wi' such a story. Ye'll mak it, I'm doubting, a matter of reproach and vaunt when ye gae hame, how Willie Borlan o' Caerlaverock told ye a tale of Scottish iniquity, that cowed a' the stories in southern book or history."

This unexpected obstacle was soon removed.

"My sage and considerate friend," I said, "I have the blood in my bosom that will keep me from revealing such a tale to the scoffer and the scorner. I am something of a Caerlaverock man—the grandson of Marion Stobie of Dookdub."

The peasant seized my hand—"Marion Stobie! bonnie Marion Stobie o' Dookdub—whom I wooed sae sair, and loved sae lang!—Man, I love ye for her sake; and well was it for her braw English bridegroom that William Borlan—frail and faded now, but strong and in manhood then—was a thousand miles from Caerlaverock, rolling on the salt sea, when she was brided. Ye have the glance of her ee,—I could ken it yet amang ten thousand, gray as my head is. I will tell the grandson of bonnie Marion Stobie ony tale he likes to ask for; and the story of the Ghost and the Gowd Casket shall be foremost."

"You may imagine then," said the old Caerlaverock peasant, rising at once with the commencement of his story from his native dialect into very passable English—"you may imagine these ruined walls raised again in their beauty,—whitened, and covered with a coating of green broom; that garden, now desolate, filled with herbs in their season, and with flowers, hemmed round with a fence of cherry and plum-

trees; and the whole possessed by a young fisherman, who won a fair subsistence for his wife and children from the waters of the Solway sea: you may imagine it, too, as far from the present time as fifty years. There are only two persons living now, who remember when the Bonne Homme Richard—the first ship ever Richard Faulder commanded—was wrecked on the Pelock sands: one of these persons now addresses you, the other is the fisherman who once owned that cottage,—whose name ought never to be named, and whose life seems lengthened as a warning to the earth, how fierce God's judgments are. Life changes — all breathing things have their time and their season; but the Solway flows in the same beauty—Criffel rises in the same majesty—the light of morning comes, and the full moon arises now, as they did then;—but this moralizing matters little. It was about the middle of harvest—I remember the day well; it had been sultry and suffocating, accompanied by rushings of wind, sudden convulsions of the water, and cloudings of the sun:—I heard my father sigh and say, 'Dool, dool to them found on the deep sea to-night; there will happen strong storm and fearful tempest!'

"The day closed, and the moon came over Skiddaw: all was perfectly clear and still; frequent dashings and whirling agitations of the sea were soon heard mingling with the hasty clang of the water-fowls' wings, as they forsook the waves, and sought shelter among the hollows of the rocks. The storm was nigh. The sky darkened down at once; clap after clap of thunder followed; and lightning flashed so vividly, and so frequent, that the wide and agitated expanse of Solway was visible from side to side—from St Bees to Barnhourie. A very heavy rain, mingled with hail, succeeded; and a wind accompanied it, so fierce, and so high, that the white foam of the sea was showered as thick as snow on the summit of Caerlaverock Castle.

"Through this perilous sea, and amid this darkness and tempest, a bark was observed coming swiftly down the middle of the sea; her sails rent, and her decks crowded with people. The 'carry,' as it is called, of the tempest was direct from St Bees to Caerlaverock; and experienced men could see that the bark would be driven full on the fatal shoals of the Scottish side; but the lightning was so fierce that few dared venture to look on the approaching vessel, or take measures for endeavouring to preserve the lives of the unfortunate mariners. My father stood on the threshold of his door, and beheld all that passed in the bosom of the sea. The bark approached fast, her canvas rent to shreds, her masts nearly levelled with the deck, and the sea foaming over her so deep, and so strong, as to threaten to sweep the remains of her crew from the little refuge the broken masts and splintered beams still afforded them. She now seemed within half a mile of the shore, when a strong flash of lightning, that appeared to hang over the bark for a moment, showed the figure of a lady richly dressed, clinging to a youth who was pressing her to his bosom.

"My father exclaimed, 'Saddle me my black horse, and saddle me my gray, and bring them down to the Dead-man's bank,'—and, swift in action as he was in resolve, he hastened to the shore, his servants following with his horses. The shore of Solway presented then, as it does now, the same varying line of coast; and the house of my father stood in the bosom of a little bay, nearly a mile distant from where we sit. The remains of an old forest interposed between the bay at Dead-man's bank, and the bay at our feet; and mariners had learned to wish, that if it were their doom to be wrecked, it might be in the bay of douce William Borlan, rather than that of Gilbert Gyrape, the pro-

prietor of that ruined cottage. But human wishes are vanities, wished either by sea or land. I have heard my father say, he could never forget the cries of the mariners, as the bark smote on the Pellock bank, and the flood rushed through the chasms made by the concussion; but he could far less forget the agony of a lady—the loveliest that could be looked upon, and the calm and affectionate courage of the young man who supported her, and endeavoured to save her from destruction. Richard Faulder, the only man who survived, has often sat at my fireside, and sung me a very rude, but a very moving ballad, which he made on this young and unhappy pair; and the old mariner assured me he had only added rhymes, and a descriptive line or two, to the language in which Sir William Musgrave endeavoured to soothe and support his wife."

It seemed a thing truly singular, that at this very moment two young fishermen, who sat on the margin of the sea below us, watching their halve-nets, should sing, and with much sweetness, the very song the old man had described. They warbled verse and verse alternately; and rock and bay seemed to retain and then release the sound. Nothing is so sweet as a song by the seaside on a tranquil evening.

SIR WILLIAM MUSGRAVE.

First Fisherman.

"O lady, lady, why do you weep?
Tho' the wind be loosed on the raging deep,
Tho' the heaven be mirker than mirk may be,
And our frail bark ships a fearful sea,—
Yet thou art safe—as on that sweet night
When our bridal candles gleamed far and bright."—
There came a shriek, and there came a sound,
And the Solway roared, and the ship spun round.

Second Fisherman.

"O lady, lady, why do you cry?
Though the waves be flashing top-mast high,
Though our frail bark yields to the dashing brine,
And heaven and earth show no saving sign,
There is One who comes in the time of need,
And curbs the waves as we curb a steed."—
The lightning came, with the whirlwind blast,
And cleaved the prow, and smote down the mast.

First Fisherman.

'O lady, lady, weep not nor wail,
Though the sea runs howe as Dalswinton vale,
Then flashes high as Barnhourie brave,
And yawns for thee, like the yearning grave—
Tho' twixt thee and the ravening flood
There is but my arm and this splintering wood,
The fell quicksand, or the famished brine,
Can ne'er harm a face so fair as thine."

Both.

"O lady, lady, be bold and brave,
Spread thy white breast to the fearful wave,
And cling to me with that white right hand,
And I'll set thee safe on the good dry land."
A lightning flash on the shallop strook,
The Solway roared, and Caerlaverock shook:
From the sinking ship there were shriekings cast,
That were heard above the tempest's blast.

The young fishermen having concluded their song, my companion proceeded.

"The lightning still flashed vivid and fast, and the storm raged with unabated fury; for, between the ship and the shore, the sea broke in frightful undulation, and leaped on the greensward several fathoms deep abreast. My father, mounted on one horse, and holding another in his hand, stood prepared to give all the aid that a brave man could to the unhappy mariners; but neither horse nor man could endure the onset of that tremendous surge. The bark bore for a time the fury of the element; but a strong eastern wind came suddenly upon her, and crushing her between the wave and the freestone bank, drove her from the entrance of my father's little bay towards the dwelling of Gibbie Gyrape, and the thick forest intervening, she was out of sight in a moment. My father saw, for the last time, the lady and her husband looking shoreward from the side of the vessel, as she drifted along; and as he galloped round the head of the forest, he heard for the last time the outcry of

some, and the wail and intercession of others. When he came before the fisherman's house, a fearful sight presented itself: the ship, dashed to atoms, covered the shore with its wreck, and with the bodies of the mariners—not a living soul escaped, save Richard Faulder, whom the fiend who guides the spectre shallop of the Solway had rendered proof to the perils of the deep. The fisherman himself came suddenly from his cottage, all dripping and drenched, and my father addressed him:—

"'O, Gilbert, Gilbert, what a fearful sight is this! Has Heaven blessed thee with making thee the means of saving a human soul?'

"'Nor soul nor body have I saved,' said the fisherman, doggedly. 'I have done my best; the storm proved too stark, and the lightning too fierce for me; their boat alone came near with a lady and a casket of gold, but she was swallowed up with the surge.'

"My father confessed afterwards that he was struck with the tone in which these words were delivered, and made answer—

"'If thou hast done thy best to save souls to-night, a bright reward will be thine;—if thou hast been fonder for gain than for working the mariners' redemption, thou hast much to answer for.'

"As he uttered these words, an immense wave rolled landward, as far as the place where they stood; it almost left its foam on their faces, and suddenly receding, deposited at their feet the dead body of the lady. As my father lifted her in his arms, he observed that the jewels which had adorned her hair—at that time worn long—had been forcibly rent away; the diamonds and gold that enclosed her neck, and ornamented the bosom of her rich satin dress, had been torn off,—the rings removed from her fingers,—and on her neck, lately so lily-white and pure, there appeared the marks of hands—not laid there in love and gentleness, but with a fierce and deadly grasp.

"The lady was buried with the body of her husband, side by side, in Caerlaverock burial-ground. My father never openly accused Gilbert the fisherman of having murdered the lady for her riches, as she reached the shore, preserved from sinking, as was supposed, by her long, wide, and stiff satin robes;—but from that hour till the hour of his death, my father never broke bread with him—never shook him or his by the hand, nor spoke with them in wrath or in love. The fisherman from that time, too, waxed rich and prosperous; and from being the needy proprietor of a halve-net, and the tenant at will of a rude cottage, he became, by purchase, lord of a handsome inheritance, proceeded to build a bonny mansion, and called it Gyrape-ha'; and became a leading man in a flock of a purer kind of Presbyterians, and a precept and example to the community.

"But though the portioner of Gyrape-ha' prospered wondrously, his claims to parochial distinction, and the continuance of his fortune, were treated with scorn by many, and with doubt by all; though nothing open or direct was said, yet looks, more cutting at times than the keenest speech, and actions still more expressive, showed that the hearts of honest men were alienated—the cause was left to his own interpretation. The peasant scrupled to become his servant; sailors hesitated to receive his grain on board, lest perils should find them on the deep; the beggar ceased to solicit alms; the drover and horse-couper—an unscrupulous generation—found out a more distant mode of concluding bargains than by shaking his hand; his daughters, handsome and blue-eyed, were neither wooed nor married; no maiden would hold tryst with his sons, though maidens were then as little loth as they are now; and the

aged peasant, as he passed his new mansion, would shake his head and say—'The voice of spilt blood will be lifted up against thee; and a spirit shall come up from the waters, and cause the corner-stone of thy habitation to tremble and quake.'

It happened, during the summer which succeeded this unfortunate shipwreck, that I accompanied my father to the Solway, to examine his nets. It was near midnight, the tide was making, and I sat down by his side and watched the coming of the waters. The shore was glittering in starlight as far as the eye could reach. Gilbert, the fisherman, had that morning removed from his cottage to his new mansion; the former was therefore untenanted, and the latter, from its vantage-ground on the crest of the hill, threw down to us the sound of mirth, and music, and dancing, —a revelry common in Scotland on taking possession of a new house. As we lay quietly looking on the swelling sea, and observing the water-fowl swimming and ducking in the increasing waters, the sound of the merriment became more audible. My father listened to the mirth, looked to the sea, looked to the deserted cottage, and then to the new mansion, and said—

"'My son, I have a counsel to give thee; treasure it in thy heart, and practise it in thy life: the daughters of *him* of Gyrape-ha' are fair, and have an eye that would wile away the wits of the wisest. Their father has wealth,—I say nought of the way he came by it,—they will have golden portions doubtless. But I would rather lay thy head aneath the gowans in Caerlaverock kirkyard (and son have I none beside thee), than see thee lay it on the bridal pillow with the begotten of that man, though she had Nithsdale for her dowry. Let not my words be as seed sown on the ocean. I may not now tell thee why this warning is given. Before that fatal shipwreck, I would have said Prudence Gyrape, in her kirtle, was a better bride than some who have golden dowers. I have long thought some one would see a sight; and often, while holding my halve-net in the midnight tide, have I looked for something to appear, for where blood is shed there doth the spirit haunt for a time, and give warning to man. May I be strengthened to endure the sight!'

"I answered not, being accustomed to regard my father's counsel as a matter not to be debated, as a solemn command: we heard something like the rustling of wings on the water, accompanied by a slight curling motion of the tide. 'God haud His right hand about us!' said my father, breathing thick with emotion and awe, and looking on the sea with a gaze so intense that his eyes seemed to dilate, and the hair of his forehead to project forward, and bristle into life. I looked, but observed nothing, save a long line of thin and quivering light, dancing along the surface of the sea: it ascended the bank, on which it seemed to linger for a moment, and then entering the fisherman's cottage, made roof and rafter gleam with a sudden illumination. 'I'll tell thee what, Gibbie Gyrape,' said my father, 'I wouldna be the owner of thy heart, and the proprietor of thy right hand, for all the treasures in earth and ocean.'

"A loud and piercing scream from the cottage made us thrill with fear, and in a moment the figures of three human beings rushed into the open air, and ran towards us with a swiftness which supernatural dread alone could inspire. We instantly knew them to be three noted smugglers who infested the country; and rallying when they found my father maintain his ground, they thus mingled their fears and the secrets of their trade, for terror fairly overpowered their habitual caution.

"'I vow by the night tide, and the crooked timber,' said Willie Weethause,

'I never beheld sic a light as yon since our distillation pipe took fire, and made a burnt instead of a drink offering of our spirits; I'll uphold it comes for nae good—a warning maybe—sae ye may gang on, Wattie Bouseaway, wi' yer wickedness; as for me, I'se gang hame and repent.'

"'Saulless bodie!' said his companion, whose natural hardihood was considerably supported by his communion with the brandy cup—'saulless bodie, for a flaff o' fire and a maiden's shadow, would ye foreswear the gallant trade? Saul to gude! but auld Miller Morison shall turn yer thrapple into a drain-pipe to wyse the waste water from his mill, if ye turn back now, and help us nae through wi' as strong an importation as ever cheered the throat, and cheeped in the crapin. Confound the fuzhionless bodie! he glowers as if this fine starlight were something frae the warst side o' the world, and thae staring een o' his are busy shaping heaven's sweetest and balmiest air into the figures of wraiths and goblins.'

"'Robert Telfer,' said my father, addressing the third smuggler, 'tell me naught of the secrets of your perilous trade; but tell me what you have seen, and why ye uttered that fearful scream, that made the wood-doves start from Caerlaverock pines.'

"'I'll tell ye what, goodman,' said the mariner, 'I have seen the fires of heaven running as thick along the sky, and on the surface of the ocean, as ye ever saw the blaze on a bowl o' punch at a merry-making, and neither quaked nor screamed; but ye'll mind the light that came to that cottage to-night was one for some fearful purport, which let the wise expound; sae it lessened nae one's courage to quail for sic an apparition? 'Od, if I thought living soul would ever make the start I gied an upcast to me, I'd drill his breast-bane with my dirk like a turnip-lantern.'

"My father mollified the wrath of this maritime desperado, by assuring him that he beheld the light go from the sea to the cottage, and that he shook with terror, for it seemed no common light.

"'Ou, then,' said hopeful Robin, 'since it was ane o' our ain cannie sea apparitions, I care less about it. I took it for some landward sprite! And now I think on't, where were my een? Did it no stand amang its ain light, with its long hanks of hair dripping and drenched; with a casket of gold in ae hand, and the other guarding its throat? I'll be bound it's the ghost o' some sonsie lass that has had her neck nipped for her gold; and had she stayed till I emptied the bicker o' brandy, I would have asked a cannie question or twa.'

"Willie Weethause had now fairly overcome his consternation, and began to feel all his love return for the 'gallant trade,' as his comrade called it.

"'The tide serves, lads! the tide serves; let us slip our drap o' brandy into the bit bonnie boat, and tottle awa amang the sweet starlight as far as the Kingholm or the town quarry—ye ken we have to meet Bailie Gardevine and Laird Soukaway o' Ladlemouth.'

"They then returned, not without hesitation and fear, to the old cottage; carried their brandy to the boat; and as my father and I went home, we heard the dipping of their oars in the Nith, along the banks of which they sold their liquor, and told their tale of fear, magnifying its horror at every step, and introducing abundance of variations.

"The story of the Ghost with the Golden Casket flew over the country side with all its variations, and with many comments. Some said they saw her, and some thought they saw her; and those who had the hardihood to keep watch on the beach at midnight had their tales to tell of terrible lights and strange visions. With one who

delighted in the marvellous, the spectre was decked in attributes that made the circle of auditors tighten round the hearth; while others, who allowed to a ghost only a certain quantity of thin air to clothe itself in, reduced it in their description to a very unpoetic shadow, or a kind of better sort of will-o'-the-wisp, that could for its own amusement counterfeit the human shape. There were many others who, like my father, beheld the singular illumination appear at midnight on the coast; saw also something sailing along with it in the form of a lady in bright garments, her hair long and wet, and shining in diamonds; and heard a struggle, and the shriek as of a creature drowning.

"The belief of the peasantry did not long confine the apparition to the sea coast; it was seen sometimes late at night far inland, and following Gilbert the fisherman, like a human shadow—like a pure light—like a white garment—and often in the shape and with the attributes in which it disturbed the carousal of the smugglers. I heard douce Davie Haining—a God-fearing man, and an elder of the Burgher congregation, and on whose word I could well lippen, when drink was kept from his head—I heard him say that as he rode home late from the Roodfair of Dumfries—the night was dark, there lay a dusting of snow on the ground, and no one appeared on the road but himself; he was lilting and singing the canny end of the auld sang, 'There's a cutty stool in our kirk,' which was made on some foolish quean's misfortune, when he heard the sound of horses' feet behind him at full gallop, and ere he could look round, who should flee past, urging his horse with whip and spur, but Gilbert the fisherman! 'Little wonder that he galloped,' said the elder, 'for a fearful form hovered around him, making many a clutch at him, and with every clutch uttering a shriek most piercing to hear. But why should I make a long story of a common tale? The curse of spilt blood fell on him, and on his children, and on all he possessed; his sons and daughters died; his flocks perished; his grain grew, but never filled the ear; and fire came from heaven, or rose from hell, and consumed his house and all that was therein. He is now a man of ninety years; a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, without a house to put his white head in, and with the unexpiated curse still clinging to him."

While my companion was making this summary of human wretchedness, I observed the figure of a man, stooping to the earth with extreme age, gliding through among the bushes of the ruined cottage, and approaching the advancing tide. He wore a loose great-coat, patched to the ground, and fastened round his waist by a belt and buckle; the remains of stockings and shoes were on his feet; a kind of fisherman's cap surmounted some remaining white hairs, while a long peeled stick supported him as he went. My companion gave an involuntary shudder when he saw him—

"Lo and behold, now, here comes Gilbert the fisherman! Once every twenty-four hours does he come, let the wind and the rain be as they will, to the nightly tide, to work o'er again, in imagination, his old tragedy of unrighteousness. See how he waves his hand, as if he welcomed some one from the sea; he raises his voice, too, as if something in the water required his counsel; and see how he dashes up to the middle, and grapples with the water as if he clutched a human being!"

I looked on the old man, and heard him call in a hollow and broken voice—

"Ahoy! the ship ahoy,—turn your boat's head ashore! And, my bonnie leddy, keep haud o' yer casket. Hech be't! that wave would have sunk a three-decker, let a be a slender boat.

See—see an she binna sailing abune the water like a wild swan! "—and wading deeper in the tide as he spoke, he seemed to clutch at something with both hands, and struggle with it in the water.

"Na, na—dinna haud your white hands to me; ye wear ower mickle gowd in your hair, and ower mony diamonds on your bosom, to 'scape drowning. There's as mickle gowd in this casket as would have sunk thee seventy fathom deep." And he continued to hold his hands under the water, muttering all the while.

"She's half gane now; and I'll be a braw laird, and build a bonnie house, and gang crousely to kirk and market. Now I may let the waves work their will; my wark will be ta'en for theirs."

He turned to wade to the shore, but a large and heavy wave came full dash on him, and bore him off his feet, and ere any assistance reached him, all human aid was too late; for nature was so exhausted with the fulness of years, and with his exertions, that a spoonful of water would have drowned him. The body of this miserable old man was interred, after some opposition from the peasantry, beneath the wall of the kirkyard; and from that time the Ghost with the Golden Casket was seen no more, and only continued to haunt the evening tale of the hind and the farmer.

RANALD OF THE HENS:

A TRADITION OF THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS.

EARLY in the sixteenth century, Macdonald of Clanranald married the daughter of Fraser Lord Lovat, and from this connection some very unfortunate consequences to both these powerful families followed. Soon after his marriage Clanranald died, and left but one lawful son, who was bred and educated at Castle Donie, the seat of Lovat, under the care of his maternal grandfather. The name of the young chieftain was Ranald, and, unhappily for himself, he was distinguished by the appellation *Gaulta*, or Lowland, because Lovat's country was considered as approaching towards the manners, customs, and appearance of the Lowlands, compared to his own native land of Moidart, one of the most barren and mountainous districts in the Highlands.

Ranald was an accomplished youth, and promised to be an ornament to his family and his country; his disposition was amiable, and his personal appearance extremely handsome and prepossessing. While yet a stripling, he visited his estate; and his people being desirous to give him the best reception in their power, he found at every house great entertainments provided, and much expense incurred by the slaughter of cattle and other acts of extravagance, which appeared to Ranald very superfluous. He was a stranger to the customs of the country, and it would seem that he had no friendly or judicious counsellor. In an evil hour, he remarked that he was extremely averse to this ruinous practice, which he was convinced the people could ill afford; and said that, for his own part, he would be perfectly satisfied to dine on a fowl. Ranald had an illegitimate

brother (or, as some say, an uncle's son), who was born and bred on the estate. He was many years older than the young Clanranald, and was possessed of very superior abilities in his way. He was active, brave, and ambitious, to which were added much address and shrewdness. Having always resided in Moidart, where he associated with the people, and had rendered himself very popular, he had acquired the appellation of *Ian Muidartich*, or John of Moidart,—a much more endearing distinction than *Gaulta*.

The remark Ranald had made as to the extravagance of his people gave great offence; and the preference he gave to a fowl was conceived to indicate a sordid disposition, unbecoming the representative of so great a family. John Muidartich and his friends encouraged these ideas, and Ranald was soon known by the yet more contemptuous appellation of "Ranald of the Hens." He soon left Moidart, and returned to his grandfather's house. His brother (and now his opponent) remained in that country, and he used all the means in his power to strengthen his interest. He married the daughter of Macdonald of Ardnamurchan, the head of a numerous and turbulent tribe, whose estate bordered on Moidart, and his intention to oppose Ranald became daily more evident. Several attempts were made by mutual friends to effect a compromise, without any permanent result. At length a conference between the brothers was appointed at Inverlochy, where Ranald attended, accompanied by old Lovat and a considerable body of his clan; but especially a very large portion of the principal gentlemen of his name were present. John also appeared, and, to prevent any suspicion of violence, the number of his attendants was but small, and his demeanour was pacific and unassuming.

Lovat made proposals on the part of his grandson, and with very little hesitation they were acceded to by John and his friends. All parties appeared to be highly pleased, and they separated,—John and his small party directing their course homeward, whilst Ranald accompanied his aged relation to his own country, which was much more distant.

John of Moidart, however, was all along playing a deep game: he ordered a strong body of his father-in-law's people to lie in ambush in a certain spot near the path by which Lovat and his men must necessarily pass on their return home; and he took care to join them himself, by travelling all night across the mountains.

The Frasers and young Clanranald appeared, and they were attacked by their wily foe. The combat was fearfully bloody and fatal. It is said that no more than six of Lovat's party escaped, and not triple that number of their enemies—Ranald, unquestionably the lawful representative of the family, fell covered with wounds, after having given proof that he was possessed of the greatest bravery; and his memory is to this day respected even among the descendants of those who destroyed him. John of Moidart obtained possession of the whole estate, and led a very turbulent life. Tradition says that he compromised the claims of Macdonald of Morar for a third part of his lands, which he yielded up to him on relinquishing further right.

The conflict is distinguished by the designation of *Blar Leine*, or the Battle of the Shirts, the combatants having stripped themselves during the action. It was fought at the eastern end of Loch Lochy, near the line of the Caledonian Canal, in July 1554.—*Literary Gazette.*

THE FRENCH SPY.

By John Galt.

One day—in the month of August it was—I had gone on some private concernment of my own to Kilmarnock, and Mr Booble, who was then oldest bailie, naturally officiated as chief magistrate in my stead.

There had been, as the world knows, a disposition, on the part of the grand monarque of that time, to invade and conquer this country, the which made it a duty incumbent on all magistrates to keep a vigilant eye on the incomings and outgoings of aliens and other suspectable persons. On the said day, and during my absence, a Frenchman, that could speak no manner of English, somehow was discovered in the Cross Key Inn. What he was, or where he came from, nobody at the time could tell, as I was informed; but there he was, having come into the house at the door, with a bundle in his hand, and a portmanteau on his shoulder, like a traveller out of some vehicle of conveyance. Mrs Drammer, the landlady, did not like his looks; for he had toozy black whiskers, was lank and wan, and moreover deformed beyond human nature, as she said, with a parrot nose, and had no cravat, but only a bit black riband drawn through two button-holes, fastening his ill-coloured sark-neck, which gave him altogether something of an unwholesome, outlandish appearance.

Finding he was a foreigner, and understanding that strict injunctions were laid on the magistrates by the king and government anent the egressing of such persons, she thought, for the credit of her house, and the safety of the community at large, that it behoved her to send word to me, then provost, of this man's visibility among us; but as I was not at home, Mrs Pawkie, my wife, directed the messenger to Bailie Booble's. The bailie was, at all times, overly ready to claught at an alarm; and when he heard the news, he went straight to the council-room, and sending for the rest of the council, ordered the alien enemy, as he called the forlorn Frenchman, to be brought before him. By this time the suspicion of a spy in the town had spread far and wide; and Mrs Pawkie told me, that there was a pallid consternation in every countenance when the black and yellow man—for he had not the looks of the honest folks of this country—was brought up the street between two of the town officers, to stand an examine before Bailie Booble.

Neither the bailie, nor those that were then sitting with him, could speak any French language, and "the alien enemy" was as little master of our tongue. I have often wondered how the bailie did not jalouse that he could be no spy, seeing how, in that respect, he wanted the main faculty. But he was under the enchantment of a panic, partly thinking also, perhaps, that he was to do a great exploit for the government in my absence.

However, the man was brought before him, and there was he, and them all, speaking loud out to one another as if they had been hard of hearing, when I, on coming home from Kilmarnock, went to see what was going on in the council. Considering that the procedure had been in hand some time before my arrival, I thought it judicious to leave the whole business with those present, and to sit still as a spectator; and really it was very comical to observe how the bailie was driven to his wits'-end by the poor lean and yellow Frenchman, and in what a pucker of passion the

panel put himself at every new interlocutor, none of which he could understand. At last, the bailie getting no satisfaction — how could he?—he directed the man's portmanteau and bundle to be opened; and in the bottom of the forementioned package, there, to be sure, was found many a mystical and suspicious paper, which no one could read; among others, there was a strange map, as it then seemed to all present.

"I' gude faith," cried the bailie, with a keckle of exultation, "here's proof enough now. This is a plain map o' the Frith o' Clyde, all the way to the Tail of the Bank at Greenock. This muckle place is Arran; that round ane is the Craig of Ailsa; the wee ane betweenis Pladda. Gentlemen, gentlemen, this is a sore discovery; there will be hanging and quartering on this." So he ordered the man to be forthwith committed as a king's prisoner to the tolbooth; and turning to me said—"My Lord Provost, as ye have not been present throughout the whole of this troublesome affair, I'll e'en gie an account mysel to the Lord Advocate of what we have done." I thought, at the time, there was something fey and overly forward in this, but I assented; for I know not what it was that seemed to me as if there was something neither right nor regular; indeed, to say the truth, I was no ill pleased that the bailie took on him what he did; so I allowed him to write himself to the Lord Advocate; and, as the sequel showed, it was a blessed prudence on my part that I did so. For no sooner did his lordship receive the bailie's terrifying letter, than a special king's messenger was sent to take the spy into Edinburgh Castle; and nothing could surpass the great importance that Bailie Booble made of himself on the occasion, on getting the man into a coach, and two dragoons to guard him into Glasgow.

But oh! what a dejected man was the miserable Bailie Booble, and what a laugh rose from shop and chamber, when the tidings came out from Edinburgh that "the alien enemy" was but a French cook coming over from Dublin, with the intent to take up the trade of a confectioner in Glasgow, and that the map of the Clyde was nothing but a plan for the outset of a fashionable table—the bailie's island of Arran being the roast beef, and the Craig of Ailsa the plum-pudding, and Pladda a butter-boat. Nobody enjoyed the jocularity of the business more than myself; but I trembled when I thought of the escape that my honour and character had with the Lord Advocate. I trow, Bailie Booble never set himself so forward from that day to this.—"*The Provost.*"

THE MINISTER'S BEAT.

A man he was to all the country dear.

.

Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.—*Goldsmith.*

CHAPTER I.

"I AM just about to make a round of friendly visits," said the minister; "and as far as our roads lie together, you will perhaps go with me. You are a bad visitor, I know, Mr Frank; but most of my calls will be where forms are unknown, and etiquette dispensed with."

I am indeed a bad visitor, which, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, means no visitor at all; but I own the temptation of seeing my worthy friend's reception, and the hope of coming in for a share of the cordial welcome he was sure to call forth, overcame my scruples; especially as in cottages and farm-steadings there is generally something to be learned even during a morning call;—some trait of unsophisticated nature to be smiled at, or some sturdy lesson of practical wisdom to be treasured for future use.

We had not ridden far when my companion, turning up a pretty rough cart-road leading to a large farmhouse on the right, said, with an arch smile,—"I love what our superstitious forefathers would esteem a lucky beginning even to a morning's ride, and am glad ours commences with a wedding visit. Peter Bandster has taken a wife in my absence, and I must go and call him to account for defrauding me of the ploy. Have you heard anything, Mr Francis, about the bride?"

More than I could wish, thinks I to myself; for my old duenna, who indemnifies herself for my lack of hospitality by assiduous frequentation of all marriages, christenings, and gossipings abroad, had deaved me for the last three weeks with philippics about this unlucky wedding. The folly of Peter in marrying above his own line; the ignorance of the bride, who scarce knew lint-yarn from tow, or bere from barley; her unpardonable accomplishments of netting purses and playing on the spinnet; above all, her plated candlesticks, flounced gown, and fashionable bonnet, had furnished Hannah with inexhaustible matter for that exercise of the tongue, which the Scots call "rhyming," and the English "ringing the changes;" to which, as to all other noises, custom can alone render one insensible.

I had no mind to damp the minister's benevolent feelings towards the couple, and contented myself with answering, that I heard the bride was both bonnie and braw. The good man shook his head. "We have an old proverb, and a true one," said he, 'a bonnie bride is sune buskit;' but I have known gawdy butterflies cast their painted wings, and become excellent housewives in the end."

"But there stands Peter—no very blithe bridegroom, methinks!" said I, as my eye rested on the tall and usually jolly young farmer, musing disconsolately in his cattle-yard over what appeared to be the body of a dead cow. He started on seeing the minister, as if ashamed of his sorrow or its cause, and came forward to meet us, struggling to adapt his countenance a little better to his circumstances.

"Well, Peter," said the minister, frankly extending his hand, "and so I am to wish you joy! I thought when I gave you your name, five-and-twenty

years ago, if it pleased God to spare me, to have given you your helpmate also; but what signifies it by whom the knot is tied, if true love and the blessing of God go with it? Nay, never hang your head, Peter; but tell me, before we beat up the young gudewife's quarters, what you were leaning over so wae-like when we rode forward."

"'Od, sir," cried Peter, reddening up, "it wasna the value o' the beast, though she was the best cow in my mother's byre, but the way I lost her, that pat me a wee out o' tune. My Jessie (for I maunna ca' her gudewife, it seems, nor mistress neither) is an ill guide o' kye, ay, and what's waur, o' lasses. We had a tea-drinking last night, nae doubt, as new-married folk should; and what for no?—I'se warrant my mither had them too in her daft days. But she didna keep the house asteer the hale night wi' fiddles and dancin', and it neither New Year nor Hansel Monday; nor she didna lie in her bed till aught or nine o'clock, as my Jess does; na, nor yet"——

"But what has all this to do with the loss of your cow, Peter?"

"Ower muckle, sir; ower muckle. The lasses and lads liket reels as weel as their mistress, and whisky a hantle better. They a' sleepit in, and mysel among the lave. Nae mortal ever lookit the airt that puir Blue Bell was in, and her at the very calving; and this morning, when the byre-door was opened, she was lying stiff and stark, wi' a dead calf beside her. It's no the cow, sir (though it was but the last market I had the offer o' fifteen pund for her), it's the thought that she was sae sair neglected amang me, and my Jess, and her tawpies o' lasses."

"Come, come, Peter," said the good minister, "you seem to have been as much to blame as the rest; and as for your young town bride, she maun creep, as the auld wives say, before she can gang. Country thrift can no more be learnt in a day than town breeding; and of that your wife, they say, has her share."

"Ower muckle, may be," was the half-muttered reply, as he marshalled us into the house. The "ben" end of the old-fashioned farm-house, which, during the primitive sway of Peter's mother, had exhibited the usual decorations of an aumrie, a clock, and a pair of press-beds, with a clean swept ingle, and carefully sanded floor, had undergone a metamorphosis not less violent than some of Ovid's or Harlequin's. The "aumrie" had given place to a satin-wood work-table, the clock to a mirror, and the press-beds (whose removal no one could regret) to that object of Hannah's direst vituperations —the pianoforte; while the fire-place revelled in all the summer luxury of elaborately twisted shavings, and the once sanded floor was covered with an already soiled and faded carpet, to whose delicate colours Peter, fresh from the clay furrows, and his two sheep-dogs dripping from the pond, had nearly proved equally fatal.

In this *sanctum sanctorum* sat the really pretty bride, in all the dignity of outraged feeling which ignorance of life and a lavish perusal of romances could inspire, on witnessing the first cloud on her usually good-natured husband's brow. She hastily cleared up her ruffled looks, gave the minister a cordial, though somewhat affected welcome, and dropped me a curtsey which twenty years' rustication enabled me very inadequately to return.

The good pastor bent on this new lamb of his fold a benignant yet searching glance, and seemed watching where, amid the fluent small talk which succeeded, he might edge in a word of playful yet serious import to the happiness of the youthful pair. The bride was stretching forth her hand with all the dignity of her new station, to ring the bell for cake and wine, when Peter

(whose spleen was evidently waiting for a vent), hastily starting up, cried out, "Mistress! if ye're ower grand to serve the minister yoursel, there's ane 'ill be proud to do't. There shall nae quean fill a glass for him in this house while it ca's me master. My mither wad hae served him on her bended knees, gin he wad hae let her; and ye think it ower muckle to bring ben the bridal bread to him! Oh, Jess, Jess! I canna awa wi' your town ways and town airs."

The bride coloured and pouted; but there gathered a large drop in her eye, and the pastor hailed it as an earnest of future concession. He took her hand kindly, and put it into Peter's not reluctant one. "'Spring showers make May flowers,' my dear lassie, says the old proverb, and I trust out o' these little clouds will spring your future happiness. You, Jessy, have chosen an honest, worthy, kind-hearted, country husband, whose love will be well worth the sacrifice of a few second-hand graces. And you, Peter, have taken, for better and for worse, a lassie, in whose eye, in spite of foreign airs, I read a heart to be won by kindness. Bear and forbear, my dear bairns—let each be apter to yield than the other to exact. You are both travelling to a better country; see that ye fall not out by the way."

The bride by this time was sobbing, and Peter's heart evidently softened. So leaving the pair to seal their reconciliation in this favourable mood, the good minister and I mounted our horses, and rode off without further parley.

We were just turning the corner of the loan to regain the high road, when a woman from a cottage in an adjoining field came running to intercept us. There was in her look a wildness bordering on distraction, but it was evidently of no painful kind. She seemed like one not recovered from the first shock of some delightful surprise, too much for the frail fabric of mortality to bear without tottering to its very foundations. The minister checked his horse, whose bridle she grasped convulsively, panting partly from fatigue and more from emotion, endeavouring, but vainly, to give utterance to the tidings with which her bosom laboured. Twice she looked up, shook her head, and was silent; then with a strong effort faltered out,—

"He's come back!—the Lord be praised for it!"

"Who is come back, Jenny?" said the pastor, in the deepest tone of sympathy,—"Is it little Andrew, ye mean?"

"Andrew!" echoed the matron, with an expression of contempt, which at any other time this favourite grandchild would have been very far from calling forth—"Andrew!—Andrew's *father*, I mean my ain first-born son Jamie, that I wore mournings for till they would wear nae langer, and thought lying fifty fathoms down in solid ice, in yon wild place Greenland, or torn to pieces wi' savage bears, like the mocking bairns in Scripture,—he's yonder!" said she, wildly pointing to the house; "he's yonder, living, and living like; and oh, gin ye wad come, and maybe speak a word in season to us, we might be better able to praise the Lord, as is His due."

We turned our horses' heads, and followed her as she ran, or rather flew, towards the cottage with the instinct of some animal long separated from its offspring. The little boy before mentioned ran out to hold our horses, and whispered as the minister stooped to stroke his head, "Daddy's come hame frae the sea."

The scene within the cottage baffles description. The old mother, exhausted with her exertion, had sunk down beside her son on the edge of the bed on which he was sitting, where his blind and bed-rid father lay, and clasped his withered hands in speechless prayer. His lips continued to move, unconscious of our presence, and ever and anon he

stretched forth a feeble arm to ascertain the actual vicinity of his long-mourned son. On a low stool, before the once gay and handsome, but now frost-nipt and hunger-worn mariner, sat his young wife, her hand firmly clasped in his, her fixed eye riveted on his countenance, giving no other sign of life than a convulsive pressure of the former, or a big drop descending unwiped from the latter; while her unemployed hand was plucking quite mechanically the badge of widowhood from her duffle cloak, which (having just reached home as her husband knocked at his father's door) was yet lying across her knee.

The poor sailor gazed on all around him with somewhat of a bewildered air, but most of all upon a rosy creature between his knees, of about a year and a half old, born just after his departure, and who had only learned the sad word "Daddy," from the childish prattle of his older brother Andrew, and his sisters. Of these, one had been summoned, wild and barelegged, from the herding, the other, meek and modest, from the village school. The former, idle and intractable, half shrunk in fear of her returned parent's well-remembered strictness; the other, too young not to have forgotten his person, only wondered whether this was the Father in heaven of whom she had heard so often. She did not think it could be so, for there was no grief or trouble there, and this father looked as if he had seen much of both.

Such was the group to whose emotions, almost too much for human nature, our entrance gave a turn.

"Jamie," said the good pastor (gently pressing the still united hands of the mariner and his faithful Annie), "you are welcome back from the gates of death and the perils of the deep. Well is it said, that they who go down to the sea in ships see more of the wonders of the Lord than other men; but it was not from storm and tempests alone that you have been delivered, — cold and famine, want and nakedness—wild beasts to devour, and darkness to dismay;—these have been around your dreary path—but He that was with you was mightier than all that were against you; and you are returned a living man to tell the wondrous tale. Let us praise the Lord, my friends, for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men." We all knelt down and joined in the brief but fervent prayer that followed. The stranger's heartfelt sigh of sympathy mingled with the pastor's pious orisons, with the feeble accents of decrepitude, the lisp of wondering childhood, the soul-felt piety of rescued manhood, and the deep, unutterable gratitude of a wife and mother's heart!

For such high-wrought emotions prayer is the only adequate channel. They found vent in it, and were calmed and subdued to the level of ordinary intercourse. The minister kindly addressed Jamie, and drew forth, by his judicious questions, the leading features of that marvellous history of peril and privations, endured by the crew of a Greenland ship detained a winter in the ice, with which all are now familiar, but of which a Parry or a Franklin can perhaps alone appreciate the horrors. They were related with a simplicity that did them ample justice.

"I never despaired, sir," said the hardy mariner; "we were young and stout. Providence, aye when at the warst, did us some gude turn, and this kept up our hearts. We had mostly a' wives or mithers at hame, and kent that prayers wadna be wanting for our safety; and little as men may think o' them on land, or even at sea on a prosperous voyage,—a winter at the Pole makes prayers precious. We had little to do but sleep; and oh, the nights were lang! I was aye a great dreamer; and, ye maunna be angry, sir (to the minister), the seeing Annie and the

bairns amaist ilka time I lay down, and aye braw and buskit, did mair to keep up my hopes than a' the rest. I never could see wee Jamie, though," said he, smiling, and kissing the child on his knee; "I saw a cradle weel enough, but the face o' the bit creature in't I never could mak out, and it vexed me; for whiles I thought my babe was dead, and whiles I feared it had never been born; but God be praised he's here, and no that unlike mysel neither."

"Annie!" said the minister, gently loosing her renewed grasp of Jamie's hand, "you are forgetting your duty as a gudewife—we maun drink to Jamie's health and happiness ere we go—we'll steal a glass or two out of old Andrew's cordial bottle; a drop of this day's joy will be better to him than it a'."

"Atweel, that's true," said the old father, with a distinctness of utterance, and acuteness of hearing, he had not manifested for many months. The bottle was brought, the health of the day went round; I shook the weather-beaten sailor warmly by the hand, and begging leave to come and hear more of his story at a fitter season, followed the minister to the door.

"Andrew," said he, giving the little patient equerry a bright new sixpence, "tell your daddy I gave you this for being a dutiful son to your mother when he was at the sea."

The child's eye glistened as he ran into the cottage to execute the welcome command, and we rode off, our hearts too full for much communication.

CHAPTER II.

THE day was advancing. These two scenes had encroached deeply on the privileged hours for visiting, and the minister, partly to turn the account of our thoughts into a less agitating channel, partly to balance the delights of the last hour with their due counterpoise of alloy, suggested the propriety of going next to pay, at the house of his patron, the laird of the parish, the visit of duty and ceremony, which his late return, and a domestic affliction in the family, rendered indispensable. There were reasons which made my going equally proper and disagreeable; and formal calls being among the many evils which are lightened by participation, I gladly availed myself of the shelter of the minister's name and company.

Mr Morison, of Castle Morison, was one of those spoiled children of fortune, whom in her cruel kindness she renders miserable. He had never known contradiction, and a straw across his path made him chafe like a resisted torrent; he had never known sorrow, and was, consequently, but half acquainted with joy; he was a stranger to compassion, and consequently himself an object of pity to all who could allow for the force of early education in searing and hardening the human heart. He had, as a boy, made his mother tremble; it is little to be wondered that in manhood he was the tyrant of his wife and children. Mrs Morison's spirit, originally gentle, was soon broken; and if her heart was not equally so, it was because she learned reluctantly to despise her tyrant, and found compensation in the double portion of affection bestowed on her by her son and daughters. For the latter, Mr Morison manifested only contempt. There was not a horse in his stable, nor a dog in his kennel, which did not engross more of his attention; but like the foxes and hares which it was the business of these favourite animals to hunt down, girls could be made to afford no bad sport in a rainy day. It was no wonder, that with them fear usurped the place of reverence for such

a parent. If they did not hate him, they were indebted to their mother's piety and their own sweet dispositions; and if they neither hated nor envied their only brother, it was not the fault of him, who, by injudicious distinctions nd blind indulgence, laid the foundation for envy and all uncharitableness in their youthful bosoms. In that of his favourite, they had the usual effect of generating self-will and rebellion; and while Jane and Agnes, well knowing nothing they did would be thought right, rarely erred from the path of duty, Edmund, aware that he could scarce do wrong, took care his privileges should not rust for want of exercise.

But though suffered in all minor matters to follow the dictates of caprice, to laugh at his tutor, lame the horse, and break rules (to all others those of the Medes and Persians), with impunity, he found himself suddenly reined up in his headlong career by an equally capricious parent, precisely at the period when restraint was nearly forgotten, and peculiarly irksome. It was tacitly agreed by both parties, that the heir of Castle Morison could only go into the army; but while the guards or a dragoon regiment was the natural enough ambition of Edmund, Morison was suddenly seized with a fit of contradiction, which he chose to style economy, and talked of a marching regiment, with perhaps an extra £100 per annum to the undoubted heir of nearly ten thousand a-year. Neither would yield—the one had taught, the other learned, stubbornness; and Edmund, backed by the sympathy of the world, and the clamours of his companions, told his father he had changed his mind, and was going to India with a near relation, about to proceed to Bombay in a high official character.

Morison had a peculiar prejudice against the East, and a personal pique towards the cousin to whose patronage Edmund had betaken himself. His rage was as boundless as his former partiality, and the only consolation his poor wife felt when her darling son left his father's house, alike impenitent and unblest, was, that her boy's disposition was originally good, and would probably recover the ascendant; and that it was out of the power of her husband to make his son a beggar as well as an exile. The estate was strictly entailed, and the knowledge of this, while it embittered Morison's sense of his son's disobedience, no doubt strengthened the feeling of independence so natural to headstrong youth.

While Morison was perverting legal ingenuity, in vain hopes of being able to disinherit his refractory heir, his unnatural schemes were anticipated by a mightier agent. An epidemic fever carried off, in one short month (about two years after his quitting England), the unreconciled, but no longer unconciliatory exile, and his young and beautiful bride; the daughter of his patron, his union with whom had been construed, by the causeless antipathy of his father, into a fresh cause of indignation. Death, whose cold hand loosens this world's grasp, and whose deep voice stills this world's strife, only tightens the bonds of nature, and teaches the stormiest spirits to "part in peace." Edmund lived to write to his father a few lines of undissembled and unconditional penitence; to own, that if the path of duty had been rugged, he had in vain sought happiness beyond it, and to entreat that the place he had forfeited in his father's favour might be transferred to his unoffending child.

All this had been conveyed to Mr Monteith and myself by the voice of rumour some days before, and we had been more shocked than surprised to learn that Morison's resentment had survived its object, and that he disclaimed all intention of ever seeing or receiving the infant boy who, it was gall to him to reflect, must inherit his estate. Mrs Morison had exerted, to soften his

hard heart, all the little influence she now possessed. Her tender soul yearned towards her Edmund's child; and sometimes the thought of seeking a separation, and devoting herself to rear it, crossed her despairing mind. But her daughters were a tie still more powerful to her unhappy home. She could neither leave them, unprotected, to its discomforts, nor conscientiously advise their desertion of a parent, however unworthy; so she wandered, a paler and sadder inmate than before of her cold and stately mansion; and her fair, subdued-looking daughters shuddered as they passed the long-locked doors of their brother's nursery and schoolroom.

The accounts of young Morison's death had arrived since the good pastor's departure, and it was with feelings of equal sympathy towards the female part of the family, and sorrow for the unchristian frame of its head, that he prepared for our present visit. As we rode up the old straight avenue, I perceived a postchaise at the door, and instead of shrinking from this probable accession of strangers, felt that any addition to the usually constrained and gloomy family circle must be a relief. On reaching the door, we were struck with a very unusual appendage to the dusty and travel-stained vehicle, in the shape of an ancient, venerable-looking Asiatic, in the dress of his country, beneath whose ample muslin folds he might easily have been mistaken for an old female nurse, a character which, in all its skill and tenderness, was amply sustained by this faithful and attached Oriental. His broken English and passionate gestures excited our attention, already awakened by the singularity of his costume and appearance; and as we got close to him, the big tears which rolled over his sallow and furrowed cheeks, powerfully called forth our sympathy, and told, better than words, his forcible exclusion from the splendid mansion which had reluctantly admitted within its precincts the child dearer to him than country and kindred!

Our visit (had it borne less of a pastoral character) had all the appearance of being very ill-timed. There were servants running to and fro in the hall, and loud voices in the dining-room; and from a little parlour on one side the front door, issued female sobs, mingled with infant wailings in an unknown dialect.

"Thank God!" whispered the minister, "the bairn is fairly in the house. Providence and nature will surely do the rest."

It was not a time to intrude abruptly, so we sent in our names to Mr Morison, and during our pretty long detention on horseback, could not avoid seeing in at the open window of the parlour beforementioned, a scene which it grieved us to think was only witnessed by ourselves.

Mrs Morison was sitting in a chair (on which she had evidently sunk down powerless), with her son's orphan boy on her knee, the bright dark eyes of the little wild unearthly-looking creature fixed in steadfast gaze on her pale matronly countenance. "No cry, Mama Englise," said the child, as her big tears rolled unheeded on his bosom—"Billy Edmund will be welly welly good." His youngest aunt, whose keen and long-repressed feelings found vent in sobs of mingled joy and agony, was covering his little hands with showers of kisses, while the elder (his father's favourite sister) was comparing behind him the rich dark locks that clustered on his neck with the locket which, since Edmund's departure, had dwelt next her heart.

A message from the laird summoned us from this affecting sight, and, amid the pathetic entreaties of the old Oriental, that we would restore his nursling, we proceeded to the dining-room, made aware of our approach to it by the still-storming, though half-suppressed im-

precations of its hard-hearted master. He was pacing in stern and moody agitation through the spacious apartment. His welcome was evidently extorted, and his face (to use a strong Scripture expression) set as a flint against the voice of remonstrance and exhortation, for which he was evidently prepared. My skilful coadjutor went quite another way to work.

"Mr Morison," said he, apparently unconscious of the poor man's pitiable state of mind, "I came to condole, but I find it is my lot to congratulate. The Lord hath taken away with the one hand, but it has been to give with the other. His blessing be with you and your son's son, whom He hath sent to be the staff and comfort of your age!" This was said with his usual benign frankness, and the hard heart, which would have silenced admonition, and scorned reproof, scarce knew how to repulse the voice of Christian congratulation. He walked about, muttering to himself—"No son of mine—bad breed! Let him go to those who taught his father disobedience, and his mother artifice!—anywhere they please; there is no room for him here."

"Have you seen your grandchild yet, Mr Morison?" resumed the minister, nothing daunted by the continued obduracy of the proud laird. "Let me have the joy of putting him into your arms. You must expect to be a good deal overcome; sweet little fellow, there is a strong likeness!"

A shudder passed across the father's hard frame, and he recoiled as from an adder, when worthy Mr Monteith, gently grasping his arm, sought to draw him, still sullen, though more faintly resisting, towards the other room. A shrill cry of infant agony rose from the parlour as we crossed the hall, and nature never perhaps exhibited a stronger contrast than presented itself between the cruel old man, struggling to escape from the presence of his grandchild, and the faithful ancient domestic shrieking wildly to be admitted into it.

As I threw open the door for the entrance of the former, little Edmund, whose infant promises of good behaviour had soon given way before the continued society of strangers, was stamping in all the impotence of baby rage (and in this unhallowed mood too faithful a miniature of both father and grandfather), and calling loudly for the old Oriental. With the first glance at the door his exclamations redoubled. We began to fear the worst effect from this abrupt introduction; but no sooner had the beautiful boy (beautiful even in passion) cast a second bewildered glance on his still erect and handsome grandfather, than, clapping his little hands, and calling out, "My Bombay papa!" he flew into his arms!

The servants, concluding the interdict removed by their master's entrance into the apartment, had ceased to obstruct the efforts of the old Hindoo to fly to his precious charge; and while the astonished and fairly overwhelmed Morison's neck was encircled by the infant grasp of his son's orphan boy, his knees were suddenly embraced by that son's devoted and gray-haired domestic.

One arm of little Edmund was instantly loosened from his grandfather's shoulder, and passed round the neck of the faithful old Oriental, who kissed alternately the little cherub hand of his nursling, and the hitherto iron one of the proud laird. It softened, and the hard heart with it! It was long since love—pure unsophisticated love, and spontaneous reverence—had been Morison's portion, and they were proportionally sweet. He buried his face in his grandson's clustering ringlets. We heard a groan deep as when rocks are rending, and the earth heaves with long pent-up fires. It was wildly mingling with childish laughter and hysteric

bursts of female tenderness, as, stealing cautiously and unheeded from the spot, we mounted our horses and rode away.

"God be praised!" said the minister, with a deep-drawn sigh, when, emerging from the gloomy avenue, we regained the cheerful beaten track. "This has been a day of strange dispensations, Mr Francis—we have seen much together to make us wonder at the ways of Providence, to soften, and, I hope, improve our hearts. But, after such solemn scenes, mine (and yours, I doubt not, also) requires something to cheer and lighten it; and I am bound where, if the sight of virtuous happiness can do it, I am sure to succeed. Do let me persuade you to be my companion a little longer, and close this day's visitation at the humble board of, I'll venture to say, the happiest couple in Scotland. I am engaged to christen the first-born of honest Willie Meldrum and his bonnie Helen, and to dine, of course, after the ceremony. Mrs Monteith and the bairns will be there to meet me; and, as my friend, you'll be 'welcome as the flowers in May.'"

After some slight scruples about intruding on this scene of domestic enjoyment, easily overruled by the hearty assurances of the divine, and my own natural relish for humble life, we marched towards the farmhouse of Blinkbonnie; and during our short ride the minister gave me, in a few words, the history of its inmates.

CHAPTER III.

"I DON'T know, Mr Francis, if you remember a bonny orphan lassie, called Helen Ormiston, whom my wife took some years back into the family to assist her in the care of the bairns. Helen was come of no ungentle kin; but poverty had sat down heavily on her father and mother, and sunk them into an early grave; and it was a godsend to poor Helen to get service in a house where poverty would be held no reproach to her. If ye ever saw the creature, ye wadna easily forget her. Many bonnier, blither lassies are to be seen daily; but such a look of settled serenity and downcast modesty ye might go far to find. It quite won my wife's heart and mine, and more hearts than ours, as I shall tell you presently. As for the bairns, they just doated on Helen, and she on them; and my poor youngest, that is now with God, during all her long, long decline, was little if ever off her knee. No wonder, then, that Helen grew pale and thin, ate little, and slept less. I first set it down to anxiety, and, when the innocent bairn was released, to grief; and from these, no doubt, it partly arose. But when all was over, and when weeks had passed away, when even my poor wife dried her mother's tears, and I could say, 'God's will be done,' still Helen grew paler and thinner, and refused to be comforted; so I saw there was more in it than appeared, and I bade her open her heart to me; and open it she did, with a flood of tears that would have melted a stone.

"'Sir,' said she, 'I maun go away. I think it will kill me to leave you and Mrs Monteith, and the dear bairns in the nursery, and wee Jeanie's grave in the kirkyard; but stay I canna, and I will tell you why. It is months, ay, amaist years, since Willie Meldrum, auld Blinkbonnie's son, fell in fancy wi' me, and a sair sair heart, I may say, I have had ever sin syne. His auld hard father, they tell me, swears (wi' sic oaths as wad gar ye grue to hear them) that he will cut him off wi' a shilling if ever he thinks o' me; and oh! it wad be a puir return for the lad's kindness to do him sic an ill turn! so I maun awa

out of the country till the auld man dies, or Willie taks a wife to his mind, for I've seen ower muckle o' poverty, Mr Monteith, to be the cause o't to ony man, though I whiles think it wad be naething to me, that's sae weel used till't mysel.'

"'Helen,' said I, 'when did Willie Meldrum find opportunities to gain your heart? I never saw him in the house in my life.'

"'Oh, sir!' said she, 'gin I could hae bidden in the house, he wad never hae seen me either; but I was forced to walk out wi' the bairns, and there was nae place sae quiet and out o' the gate, but Willie was sure to find me out. If I gaed down the burn, Willie was aye fishing; if I gaed up the loan, there was aye something to be dune about the kye. At the kirk door, Willie was aye at hand to spier for your honour, and gie the bairns posies; and after our sair distress, when I was little out for mony a day, I couldna slip out ae moonlight night, to sit a moment upon Jeanie's grave, but Willie was there like a ghaist aside me, and made my very heart loup to my mouth!'

"'And do you return his good-will, Helen?' said I, gravely.

"'Oh, sir,' said the poor thing, trembling, 'I darena tell you a lie. I tried to be as proud and as shy as a lassie should be to ane abune her degree, and that might do sae muckle better, puir fallow! I tried to look anither gate when I saw him, and mak mysel deaf when he spoke o' his love; but oh! his words were sae true and kindly, that I doubt mine werena aye sae short and saucy as they sud hae been. It's hard for a tocherless, fatherless lassie to be cauldrife to the lad that wad tak her to his heart and hame; but oh! it wad be harder still, if she was to requite him wi' a father's curse! It's ill eneuch to hae nae parents o' my ain, without makin' mischief wi' ither folk's. The auld man gets dourer and dourer ilka day, and the young ane dafter and dafter—sae ye maun just send me aff the country to some decent service, till Willie's a free man, or a bridegroom.'

"'My dear Helen,' said I, 'you are a good upright girl, and I will forward your honest intentions. If it be God's will that Willie and you come together, the hearts of men are in His hand. If otherwise, yours will never at least reproach you with bringing ruin on your lover's head.'

"So I sent Helen, Mr Francis, to my brother's in the south country, where she proved as great a blessing and as chief a favourite as she had been with us. I saw her some months afterwards; and though her bloom had not returned, she was tranquil and contented, as one who has cast her lot into the lap of Heaven.

"Well, to make a long story short, Willie, though he was unreasonable enough, good, worthy lad as he is, to take in dudgeon Helen's going away (though he might have guessed it was all for his good), was too proud, or too constant, to say he would give her up, or bind himself never to marry her, as his father insisted. So the old man, one day, after a violent altercation, made his will, and left all his hard-won siller to a rich brother in Liverpool, who neither wanted nor deserved it. Willie, upon this quarrel, had left home very unhappy, and stayed away some time, and during his absence old Blinkbonnie was taken extremely ill. When he thought himself dying, he sent for me (I had twice called in vain before), and you may be sure I did my best not to let him depart in so unchristian a frame towards his only child. I did not deny his right to advise his son in the choice of a wife; but I told him he might search the world before he found one more desirable than Helen, whose beauty and sense would secure his son's steadiness, and her frugality and sobriety double his substance. I told him how

she had turned a deaf ear to all his son's proposals of a clandestine marriage and made herself the sacrifice to his own unjust and groundless prejudices. Dying men are generally open to conviction; and I got a fresh will made in favour of his son, with a full consent to his marriage honourably inserted among its provisions. This he deposited with me, feeling no great confidence in the lawyer who had made his previous settlement, and desired me to produce it when he was gone.

"It so happened that I was called to a distance before his decease, and did not return till some days after the funeral. Willie had flown home on hearing of his father's danger, and had the comfort to find him completely softened, and to receive from his nearly speechless parent many a silent demonstration of returned affection. It was, therefore, a doubly severe shock to him, on opening the first will (the only one forthcoming in my absence), to find himself cut off from everything, except the joint lease of the farm, and instead of five thousand pounds, not worth a shilling in the world. His first exclamation, I was told, was, 'It's hard to get baith scorn and skaith—to lose baith poor Helen and the gear. If I had lost it for her, they might hae ta'en it that likit!'

"About a week after, I came home and found on my table a letter from Helen. She had heard of Willie's misfortune, and in a way the most modest and engaging, expressed herself ready, if I thought it would still be acceptable, to share his poverty and toil with him through life. 'I am weel used to work,' said she, 'and, but for you, wad hae been weel used to want. If Willie will let me bear a share o' his burden, I trust in God we may warsle through thegither; and, to tell you the truth,' added she, with her usual honesty, 'I wad rather things were ordered as they are, than that Willie's wealth should shame my poverty.'

"I put this letter in one pocket, and his father's will in the other, and walked over to Blinkbonnie. Willie was working with the manly resolution of one who has no other resource. I told him I was glad to see him so little cast down.

"'Sir,' said he, 'I'll no say but I am vexed that my father gaed to his grave wi' a grudge against me, the mair sae, as when he squeezed my hand on his death-bed I thought a' was forgotten. But siller is but warld's gear, and I could thole the want o't, an' it had nae been for Helen Ormiston, that I hoped to hae gotten to share it wi' me. She may sune do better now, wi' that bonnie face and kind heart o' hers!'

"'It is indeed a kind heart, Willie,' answered I: 'if ever I doubted it, this would have put me to shame!'—So saying, I reached him the letter, and oh, that Helen could have seen the flush of grateful surprise that crossed his manly brow as he read it! It passed away, though, quickly, and he said, with a sigh, 'Very kind, Mr Monteith, and very like hersel; but I canna take advantage o' an auld gude will, now that I canna reward it as it deserves!'"

"'And what if ye could, Willie?' said I, 'as far, at least, as worldly wealth can requite true affection? There is your father's will, made when it pleased God to touch his heart, and you are as rich a man as you were when Helen Ormiston first refused to make you a beggar.'

"Willie was not insensible to this happy change in his prospects; but his kind heart was chiefly soothed by his father's altered feelings, and at the honourable mention of Helen's name he fairly began to greet.

"The sequel is easily told; but I think the jaunt I made to Tweeddale with Willie, to bring back Helen Ormiston in triumph, was the proudest journey of my life.

"A year ago I married them at the manse, amid much joy, but abundance

of tears in the nursery. To-day, when, according to an old promise, I am to christen my name-son Charlie, I expect to be fairly deaved with the clamorous rejoicings of my young fry, who, I verily believe, have not slept this week for thinking of it. But" (pulling out his watch), "it is near four o'clock: sad quality hour for Blinkbonnie! The hotch-potch will be turned into porridge, and the how-towdies burnt to sticks, if we don't make haste!"

I wish, my dear reader, you could see the farm of Blinkbonnie, lying as it does on a gently sloping bank, sheltered from the north by a wooded crag or knoll, flanked upon the east by a group of venerable ashes, enlivened and perfumed on the west by a gay luxuriant garden, and open on the south to such a sea-view, as none but dwellers on the Firth of Forth have any idea of. Last Saturday, it was the very *beau ideal* of rural comfort and serenity. The old trees were reposing, after a course of somewhat boisterous weather, in all the dignity and silence of years. The crows, their usual inhabitants, having gone on their Highland excursion, those fantastic interlopers, Helen's peacocks (a present from the children at the manse), were already preparing for their "siesta" on the topmost boughs. Beneath the spreading branches the cows were dreaming delightfully, in sweet oblivion of the heats of noon. In an adjoining paddock, graceful foals, and awkward calves, indulged in their rival gambols; while shrieks of joy from behind the garden hedge, told these were not the only happy young things in creation.

We deposited our horses in a stable, to whose comforts they bore testimony by an approving neigh, and made our way by a narrow path, bordered with sweet-brier and woodbine, to the front of the house. Its tall, good-looking young master came hastily to meet us, and I would not have given his blushing welcome, and the bashful scrape that accompanied it, for all the most elaborate courtesies of Chesterfield.

No sooner were our footsteps heard approaching, than out poured the minister's whole family from the little honeysuckled porch, with glowing faces and tangled hair, and frocks, probably white some hours before, but which now claimed affinity with every bush in the garden.

Mrs Monteith gently joined in the chorus of reproaches to papa for being so late; but the look with which she was answered seemed to satisfy her, as it usually did, that he could not be in fault. We were then ushered into the parlour, whose substantial comforts, and exquisite consistency, spoke volumes in favour of its mistress. Opulence might be traced in the excellent quality of the homely furniture—in the liberal display of antique china (particularly the choice and curious christening-bowl)—but there was nothing incongruous, nothing out of keeping, nothing to make you for a moment mistake this first-rate farm-house parlour for a clumsy, ill-fancied drawing-room. A few pots of roses, a few shelves of books, bore testimony to Helen's taste and education; but there were neither exotics nor romances in the collection; and the piece of furniture evidently dearest in her eyes was the cradle, in which reposed, amid all the din of this joyous occasion, the yet unchristened hero of the day. It is time to speak of Helen herself, and she was just what, from her story, I knew she must be. The actors, in some striking drama of human life, often disappoint us by their utter dissimilitude to the pictures of our mind's eye, but Helen was precisely the perfection of a gentle, modest, self-possessed Scottish lassie,—the mind, in short, of Jeanie Deans, with the personal advantages of poor Effie. Her dress was as suitable as anything else. Her gown, white as snow, and her cap of the nicest materials, were

neither of them on the pattern of my lady's; but they had a matronly grace of their own, worth a thousand second-hand fashions; and when Helen, having awakened her first-born, delivered him, with sweet maternal solicitude, into the outstretched arms of the minister's proud and favoured youngest girl, I thought I never saw a picture worthier the pencil of Correggio. It was completed, when, bending in all the graceful awkwardness of a novice over the group, Willie received his boy into his arms, and vowed before his pastor and his God to discharge a parent's duty, while a parent's transport sparkled in his eyes.

I have sat, as Shakspeare says, "at good men's feasts ere now"—have ate turtle at the lord mayor's and venison at peers' tables, and *soufflés* at diplomatic dinners—have ate sturgeon at St Petersburg, and mullet at Naples; mutton in Wales, and grouse in the Highlands; roast-beef with John Bull, and *volauxvents* at Beauvilliers'; but I have no hesitation in saying that the hotch-potch and how-towdies of Blinkbonnie excelled them all. How far the happy human faces of all ages round the table contributed to enhance the gusto, I do not pretend to decide; but I can tell Mr Véry that, among all his *consommés*, there is nothing like a judicious mixture of youth and beauty, with manliness, integrity, and virtue.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

A SCOTTISH GENTLEWOMAN OF THE LAST CENTURY.

BY SUSAN EDMONSTONE FERRIER.

"THOUGH last, not least of nature's works, I must now introduce you to a friend of mine," said Mr Douglas, as they bent their steps towards the Castle-hill of Edinburgh. "Mrs Violet Macshake is an aunt of my mother's, whom you must often have heard of, and the last remaining branch of the noble race of Girnachgowl."

"I am afraid she is rather a formidable person, then?" said Mary.

Her uncle hesitated.

"No, not formidable,—only rather particular, as all old people are; but she is very good-hearted."

"I understand; in other words, she is very disagreeable. All ill-tempered people, I observe, have the character of being good-hearted, or else all good-hearted people are ill-tempered—I can't tell which."

"It is more than reputation with her," said Mr Douglas, somewhat angrily; "for she is, in reality, a very good-hearted woman, as I experienced when a boy at college. Many a crown-piece and half-guinea I used to get from her. Many a scold, to be sure, went along with them; but that, I daresay, I deserved. Besides, she is very rich, and I am her reputed heir; therefore gratitude and self-interest combine to render her extremely amiable in my estimation."

They had now reached the airy dwelling where Mrs Macshake resided, and having rung, the door was at length most deliberately opened by an ancient, sour-visaged, long-waisted female, who ushered them into an apartment, the *coup d'œil* of which struck a chill to Mary's heart. It was a good-sized room, with a bare sufficiency of small-legged dining-

tables, and lank hair-cloth chairs, ranged in high order round the walls. Although the season was advanced, and the air piercing cold, the grate stood smiling in all the charms of polished steel; and the mistress of the mansion was seated by the side of it in an arm-chair, still in its summer position. She appeared to have no other occupation than what her own meditations afforded; for a single glance sufficed to show that not a vestage of book or work was harboured there. She was a tall, large-boned woman, whom even Time's iron hand had scarcely bent, as she merely stooped at the shoulders. She had a drooping snuffy nose, a long turned-up chin, small, quick, gray eyes, and her face projected far beyond her figure, with an expression of shrewd, restless curiosity. She wore a mode (not *a-la-mode*) bonnet, and cardinal of the same; a pair of clogs over her shoes, and black silk mittens on her arms.

As soon as she recognized Mr Douglas, she welcomed him with much cordiality, shook him long and heartily by the hand,—patted him on the back,—looked into his face with much seeming satisfaction; and, in short, gave all the demonstrations of gladness usual with gentlewomen of a certain age. Her pleasure, however, appeared to be rather an *impromptu* than a habitual feeling; for as the surprise wore off, her visage resumed its harsh and sarcastic expression, and she seemed eager to efface any agreeable impression her reception might have excited.

"An' wha thought o' seein' you e'noo?" said she, in a quick gabbling voice; "what's brought you to the toun? Are ye come to spend your honest faither's siller, ere he's weel cauld in his grave, puir man?"

Mr Douglas explained, that it was upon account of his niece's health.

"Health!" repeated she, with a sardonic smile, "it wad mak a howlet laugh to hear the wark that's made about young fowk's health noo-a-days. I wonder what ye're a' made o'," grasping Mary's arm in her great bony hand; "a wheen puir feckless windle-straes—ye maun awa to England for yer healths. Set ye up! I wonder what came o' the lasses i' my time, that but to bide hame? And whilk o' ye, I sud like to ken, will e'er live to see ninety-sax, like me?—Health! he! he!"

"You have not asked after any of your Glenfern friends," said Mr Douglas, hoping to touch a more sympathetic chord.

"Time eneugh—will ye let me draw my breath, man?—fowk canna say a' thing at ance. An' ye but to hae an English wife, too?—A Scotch lass wadna ser' ye. An' yer wean, I'se warran', it's ane o' the warld's wonders—it's been unco lang o' comin'—he! he!"

"He has begun life under very melancholy auspices, poor fellow!" said Mr Douglas, in allusion to his father's death.

"An' wha's faut was that?—I ne'er heard tell the like o't, to hae the bairn kirsened an' its grandfather deein'! But fowk are neither born, nor kirsened, nor do they wad or dee as they used to do—a'thing's changed."

"You must indeed have witnessed many changes," observed Mr Douglas, rather at a loss how to utter anything of a conciliatory nature.

"Changes!—weel a wat, I sometimes wonder if it's the same warld, an' if it's my ain head that's upon my shouthers."

"But with these changes you must also have seen many improvements?" said Mary, in a tone of diffidence.

"Impruvements!" turning sharply round upon her, "what ken ye about impruvements, bairn? A bonnie impruvement to see tylors and sclaters leevin' whaur I mind Jukes and Yerls. An' that great glowerin' New Town

there," pointing out of her windows, "whaur I used to sit and look at bonnie green parks, and see the kye milket, and the bits o' bairnies rowin' an' tumblin', an' the lasses trampin' in their tubs;—what see I noo, but stane and lime, and stour and dirt, and idle chiels, and dunket-out madams prancing. —Improvements, indeed!"

Here a long pinch of snuff caused a pause in the old lady's harangue; but after having duly wiped her nose with her coloured handkerchief, and shook off all the particles that might be presumed to have lodged upon her cardinal, she resumed:

"An' nae word o' ony o' your sisters gaun to get men yet? They tell me they're but coorse lasses; an' wha'll tak ill-faured, tocherless queans, when there's walth o' bonny faces an' lang purses i' the market?—he, he!" Then resuming her scrutiny of Mary,—"An' I'se warran' ye'll be lookin' for an English sweetheart too;—that'll be what's takin' ye awa to England!"

"On the contrary," said Mr Douglas, seeing Mary was too much frightened to answer for herself—"on the contrary, Mary declares she will never marry any but a true Highlander—one who wears the dirk and plaid, and has the 'second sight.' And the nuptials are to be celebrated with all the pomp of feudal times; with bagpipes and bonfires, and gatherings of clans, and roasted sheep, and barrels of whisky, and"——

"Weel a wat an' she's i' the right there," interrupted Mrs Mackshake, with more complacency than she had yet shown. "They may ca' them what they like, but there's nae waddin's noo. Wha's the better o' them but innkeepers and chaise-drivers? I wadna count mysel married i' the hidlin's way they gang aboot it noo."

Mr Douglas, who was now rather tired of the old lady's reminiscences, availed himself of the opportunity of a fresh pinch to rise and take leave.

"Ou, what's takin' ye awa, Archie, in sic a hurry? Sit doon there," laying her hand upon his arm, "an' rest ye, and tak a glass o' wine; or maybe," turning to Mary, "ye wad rather hae a drap broth to warm ye. What gars ye look sae blae, my bairn? I'm sure it's no cauld; but ye're just like the lave; ye gang a' skiltin' about the streets half-naked, an' then ye maun sit and birsle yersels afore the fire at hame."

The wine being drunk, and the cookies discussed, Mr Douglas made another attempt to withdraw, but in vain.

"Canna ye sit still a wee, man, an' let me speir after my auld freens at Glenfern? Hoo's Grizzy, an' Jacky, an' Nicky?—aye working awa at the pills and the drogs?—he, he! I ne'er swallowed a pill, nor gaed a doit for drogs, a' my days, an' see an ony of them'll run a race wi' me when they're naur five score."

Mr Douglas here paid her some compliments upon her appearance, which were pretty well received; and added that he was the bearer of a letter from his aunt Grizzy, which he would send along with a roebuck and a brace of moor game.

"Gin your roebuck's nae better than your last, atweel it's no worth the sending,—puir fushionless dirt, no worth the chewing; weel a wat, I begrudged my teeth on't. Your muirfowl was no that ill, but they're no worth the carrying; they're dang cheap i' the market e'noo, so it's nae great compliment. Gin ye had brought me a leg o' good mutton, or a caller sawmont, there would hae been some sense in't; but ye're ane o' the fowk that'll ne'er harry yoursel wi' your presents; it's but the pickle poother they cost you, an' I'se warrant ye're thinking mair o' your ain diversion than o' my stamack when ye're at the shooting o' them, puir beasts."

Mr Douglas had borne the various

indignities levelled against himself and his family with a philosophy that had no parallel in his life before; but to this attack upon his game he was not proof. His colour rose, his eyes flashed fire, and something resembling an oath burst from his lips, as he strode indignantly towards the door.

His friend, however, was too nimble for him. She stepped before him, and breaking into a discordant laugh, as she patted him on the back,—

"So, I see ye're just the auld man, Archie,—aye ready to tak the strumps, an ye dinna get a'thing yer ain way. Mony a time I had to fleech ye oot o' the dorts when ye was a callant. Div ye mind hoo ye was affronted because I set ye doon to a cauld pigeon pie an' a tanker o' tippenny, ae night to yer four-hours, afore some leddies? he, he, he! Weel a wat, your wife maun hae her ain adoos to manage ye, for ye're a cumstarie chield, Archie."

Mr Douglas still looked as if he was irresolute whether to laugh or be angry.

"Come, come, sit ye doon there till I speak to this bairn," said she, as she pulled Mary into an adjoining bedchamber, which wore the same aspect of chilly neatness as the one they had quitted. Then pulling a large bunch of keys from her pocket, she opened a drawer, out of which she took a pair of diamond ear-rings.

"Hae, bairn," said she, as she stuffed them into Mary's hand; "they belanged to your faither's grandmother. She was a good woman, an' had four and twenty sons and dochters, an' I wuss ye nae waur fortin than just to hae as mony. But mind ye," shaking her bony finger, "they maun a' be Scots. Gin I thocht ye wad marry ony pock-puddin', fient hait wad ye gotten frae me. Noo, haud yer tongue, and dinna deave me wi' thanks," almost pushing her into the parlour again; "and sin' ye're gaun awa the morn, I'll see nae mair o' ye e'noo—so fare ye weel. But, Archie, ye maun come an' tak your breakfast wi' me. I hae muckle to say to you;—but ye maunna be sae hard upon my baps as ye used to be," with a facetious grin to her mollified favourite, as they shook hands and parted.—"*Marriage: a Novel.*"

THE FAITHLESS NURSE:

A LEGENDARY TALE OF THE GREAT REBELLION.

MOST of our readers who are citizens of "our own romantic town," are familiarly acquainted with the valley which, winding among the Pentland Hills, forms the path by which the waters of Glencorse seek their way to those of the more celebrated Esk. It has long been the haunt of those "pilgrims of his genius" who loved to see with their own eyes the sacred scene chosen by the Pastoral Poet of Scotland for the display of lowly loves and rustic beauty; and it has now—alas the day!—acquired attractions for spirits of a far different sort; and who can see without a sigh the triumphs of art domineering over and insulting the sweetest charms of nature? It is not, however, to visit the stupendous and unseemly barrier which now chains up the gentle waters of the burn, nor even to seek the summer-breathing spot where Patie sung and Roger sighed, that we now request the attendance of our readers; but

simply to point out to their attention a party of three individuals, who, on a still September evening, in the memorable year 1644, might have been seen slowly riding up the glen.

Two of the party were entitled in courtesy to be termed fair; but of these twain, one would have been acknowledged lovely by the most uncourteous boor that ever breathed. She had hardly reached the earliest years of womanhood, 'tis true, and the peachy bloom that mantled o'er her cheek showed as yet only the dawn of future loveliness; but her fair brow, on which, contrary to the fashion—we had almost said *taste*—of the times, her auburn locks danced gracefully; the laughing lustre of her dark-blue eye, and the stinging sweetness of her pouting lip, aided by an expression of indomitable gentleness of heart and kindliness of manner, lent a witchery to her countenance which few could gaze upon unmoved.

The other female had thrice the years of Lady Lilias Hay; but they had not brought her one tithe of that maiden's beauty, and what little God had given her, she had, long ere the day we saw her first, destroyed, by screwing her features into an unvarying cast of prim solemnity, which, had she practised it, would have blighted the cheek of Venus herself.

The "squire of dames" who accompanied the pair we have described was also young, his chin as yet being guiltless of a hair. But there was a firmness in his look, a dark something in his eye, that bespoke his courage superior to his years; and a scar that trenched his open brow showed that he had arrived at the daring, if not the wisdom of manhood.

On the present occasion, however, it was not a feeling of recklessness which characterised the demeanour of the youth. He was thoughtful and abstracted, riding silently by the side of the maiden, who more than once attempted to dispel the gloom which hung over the gallant. It gave way, indeed, to the influence of her gentle voice; but it was for a moment only, and the downcast eye and contracted brow ever and anon returned when the accents of her voice had ceased.

"Nay, prithee, cousin Maurice, do doff the visor of thy melancholy, and let us behold thy merry heart unmasked. I could stake my little jennet here to Elspeth's favourite "baudrons," that if Montrose should meet thee in this moody temperament, he will rather promote thee to a halter as a spy from the Committee of Estates, than to honourable command befitting one who has bled beneath the eye, and been knighted by the honour-giving hand of his royal master! Do laugh with me a little."

"Why, my dearest Lilias, you seem in higher spirits to-day than is usual with you. Cannot the surety of our parting to-morrow, and the uncertainty of our ever meeting again, throw even a passing cloud over your gaiety?"

"Modestly put, my valiant cousin. I am well reminded of my unbecoming conduct. It must, of course, be night with me when you, bright sun of my happiness, shall have withdrawn your beams from me."

"Nay, banter me not, sweet Lily. Have you never known an hour when the sweetest sights were irksome to the eye, and the softest strains of music fell harshly on the ear?"

"Pshaw! if you will neither smile nor talk, of what use are you by a lady's side? What say you to a race? Yonder stands the kirk of Saint Catherine. Will you try your roan that length? An you ride not so fast now as you did from Cromwell at Longmarston Moor, I shall beat you. *Via!*"

And so saying, the light-hearted girl gave rein to her snowy palfrey, and flew up the glen toward the edifice she

had mentioned, at a speed which Maurice Ogilvy had some difficulty in equalling, and which prevented him from overtaking her until she had reached the gate.

All who have visited—and who has not?—Roslin's "proud chapelle," are familiar with the legend of Sir William St Clair, and his venturous boast to the Bruce, that he would find, on peril of his head, a dog that would bring down the deer ere it could cross Glencorse burn;—how the trusty hound did redeem his own credit and his master's life, by seizing the quarry in the very middle of the stream;—and how, in gratitude to the gentle saint by whose intercession this mighty feat was accomplished, he built a church on the bank of the stream, and dedicated it to Saint Catherine of the Howe. This virgin martyr was unfortunately no more successful than her sister saints in protecting her mansions from the desolating zeal of the earlier reformers. The church was destroyed by a fanatical mob, and nothing now remains to record the kindness of Catherine, and the gratitude of the "high Saint Clair," but a few uneven grassy heaps of deeper green than the surrounding verdure, and the name of the neighbouring farm town, which is yet called Kirkton. At the time we are at present writing of, however, the roofless walls of the building, though gray with the ruin of a hundred years, were still almost entire, and the cemetery then and long after continued to be used by the neighbouring peasantry.

When Maurice reached the church, he found that the Lady Lilias had dismounted. He too alighted, and sought her in the interior. She was seated on a fallen stone, and the deep melancholy which now shadowed her fair countenance was more in unison with the sombre aspect of the place and of the hour, than he had expected to find it. She arose at his approach, and addressed him.

"You have something to tell me, Maurice, and you wished to do it alone. We have now an opportunity. What has befallen us?"

"Nay, fair Lily, why should you think so? Is not the thought that tomorrow we must part of itself sufficient to dull my spirit and sadden my countenance?"

"Pshaw! trifle not with me now. Your face has no secrets for one who has conned its ill-favoured features so frequently as I have done. Out with your secret! Elspeth will be with us forthwith."

Maurice seemed for some moments undecided how he should act, but at length, with a look of no little embarrassment, replied,—

"Sweet Lilias, you shall be obeyed. You can only laugh at me; and thanks to your merry heart, that is a daily pastime of yours."

"Nay, nay—say on; I will be as grave as Argyle."

"Know then, that while I waited for you and Elspeth at the bottom of the glen, a remarkable thing befell me. I had alighted, and while Rupert was trying to pick a scanty meal among the bent, I flung myself on the ground, and endeavoured to beguile the time by thinking sometimes of you, and sometimes of King Charles."

"How! sir cousin, I am not always the companion of your reveries, it seems, then? Heigho! to think what a change a single day's matrimony has accomplished!"

"Ungenerous Lilias," said Maurice, taking her hand, "listen to me. Lifting my head accidentally, I was surprised to perceive a man and woman walking away at some distance from me. The more attentively I looked at these individuals, the more uneasy I became, until my terror was completed by the figures slowly turning round and presenting to me the identical features of you, dear Lilias, and myself."

"Maurice, Maurice! you amaze me!"

"Though fully aware of the unearthly nature of these appearances, I could not resist the desire I felt of following them. I did so, tracing their silent steps up the glen, until I saw them enter the churchyard without. I hastened after, but when I too entered the cemetery, the figures had disappeared!"

The lady's cheek grew pale as she listened to this narration, for in those days the belief in such prognostications was universal; and the time of day when Maurice had seen the wraiths, their retiring motion, and the fatal spot to which he had traced them, were all indicative of fast approaching doom. She clung around her husband's neck for a few moments in silence, until the deep-seated conviction of safety while with him, which forms so striking a characteristic of feminine affection, revived her spirits; and though the tear still hung on her silken eyelash as she looked up in his face, there was a languid smile on her cheek as she said,—

"Beshrew you, Maurice, for frightening me so deeply on my wedding-day! Could you find no other time than this to see bogles?"

"Well said, love," answered Maurice, who felt no little alarm at seeing the effect which his story had produced on his wife: "'twas doubtless a mere delusion."

"Even should it prove true," replied Lilias, "we shall at least die together; and there is a tranquillising influence in that thought, Maurice, which would go far to make even death agreeable."

"Let us leave this place," said Maurice, after the emotion which so bewitching a confusion excited had in some measure subsided; "I fear Elspeth will miss us."

"What then?"

"You know that I have ever distrusted that woman. She and I are as different from each other as day from darkness. She is a staunch Covenanter —I a graceless Cavalier. She rails at love-locks, love-songs, and love-passages —I adore them all. She prays for MacCallummore, and would fain see his bonnet nod above the crown of King Charles, and the caps of his merry men; —I would rather see his head frowning on the Netherbow Port. While she opposed my suit to you, I only hated her; now that she connives at it—shall I confess it to you?—I fear her."

"Nay, now you are unjust. While in the lawful exercise of woman's just prerogative,—coquetry,—I seemed to balance the contending claims of Sir Mungo Campbell and yourself for this poor hand, Elspeth doubtlessly favoured the cause of her kinsman (all Campbell's being of course cousins); but our sovereign will once unequivocally declared, she became all submission, and has not even attempted to impugn the decision which we, somewhat foolishly perhaps, have pronounced in your favour. Besides, Maurice," continued Lilias, leaving off the mock-heroic tone in which she had hitherto spoken for one more akin to natural feeling, "Elspeth Campbell was my nurse, has a mother's affection for me, and therefore would not, I am confident, engage in any scheme inimical to my happiness."

"Still she is a Covenanter, and a Campbell," replied Maurice, "and as such, her dearest wish, even for your own sake, must be to see you the wife of him who is both the one and the other."

"Well," rejoined Lilias, colouring highly as she spoke, "that at least you have put out of her power: and yet I regret that I trusted her not in that matter. It was a secret for a woman, and a nursing mother."

"Fear not, she shall know in time. I know, I feel it is unmanly, the dread I entertain; but I cannot quell it. I wish we had not agreed to make this Logan House the trysting-place of my gallant friends: my father's dwelling had been the safer place."

"Yes; and so have set my worthy guardian, Gillespie Grumach, and his obsequious friend Sir Mungo, on our track. Come, come, your alarm is unbecoming. At dawn we leave Logan House. The madcap disguise which you have prevailed on me to adopt will prevent any recognition till you have consigned me to my noble kinswoman of Huntly; and you—but I wrong you—fear not for yourself."

"Kindly spoken, my love,—would to Heaven you indeed were in Strathbogie, and I among the gallant Grahams! But here comes Elspeth, looking as demure as if she were afraid that the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass, like the leprosy of old, might still stick to those time-worn walls, and infect her godly heart. Let us go."

Lilias looked earnestly on the countenance of her nurse as they met; for though she had not acknowledged so much to Maurice, her heart had misgiven her as she listened to his discourse. Whether it might proceed from the melancholy truth, that suspicion once excited against an individual cannot be entirely quieted by any innocence whatever, or whether the countenance of Elspeth really afforded ground for the doubt of her mistress, we are unable to determine, but certainly the latter imagined at least that she could detect alarm, solicitude, and fear, lurking amid the apparent placidity of her nurse's features."

Nothing was said, however; and the party, remounting their horses, shortly afterwards arrived at their destination for the night, namely, the Peel or Tower of Logan House. This edifice, which crowns the summit of a small knoll or brae on the northern side of Glencorse water, was one of the many places built for the safety of the population against any sudden but short-lived attack, and, from the walls, which are still left, must have been of considerable strength. It was, at the time we speak of, entire, and consisted of two storeys; the lower being devoted to the accommodation of the servants of the house, and that of the family bestial, while the upper was divided into the few apartments then thought sufficient for the accommodation of the gentles.

As they rode into the courtyard, Maurice was struck by the want of attendance which the place betrayed. At that day the laudable customs of the "queen's old courtier" had not entirely gone into desuetude, and every holding, however small, was filled with a number of retainers, that in the present day would be deemed excessive. At Logan House, however, things were very different. A stripling—half-man, half-boy—seemed the only representative of male vassalage, and the woman-servants, though more numerous, did not amount to anything near the average number which in those days divided amongst themselves, with commendable chariness, the duties of a household.

The faggots, however, blazed cheerfully in the upper apartment, and food and wine having been prepared in abundance, Maurice for a moment forgot his suspicions, and Lilias regained her sprightliness. They conversed gaily together of days gone by, and of courts and masques and pageants which they had seen, to the evident discomfort of Elspeth, who not only thought her presence becoming in her character of nurse, but somewhat necessary in the existing condition, as she imagined, of the youthful pair. Maurice soon saw her uneasiness, and wickedly resolved to make it a means of pastime to himself and Lilias.

"Do you recollect, sweet Lily, when the good King Charles kissed your cheek in Holyroodhouse, and vowed, on a king's word, to find a husband for you?'

"I do; and how a malapert page sounded in my ear that he would save his Majesty the trouble."

"And have I not kept my word—ha,

lady mine? The great Argyle and all his men will hardly, I think, undo the links that bind us to each other;" and inspired, as it seemed, by the pleasant thought, the youth took the lady's hand in his, and pressed it warmly and frequently to his lips.

Elspeth looked on in amazement at the familiarity of intercourse in which the lady indulged her cousin, and which was equally repugnant to her natural and acquired feelings on the subject.

"Pshaw! you foolish man, desist!" cried Lilias, blushing and laughing at the same time, when Maurice attempted to substitute her rosy lips for the hand he had been so fervently kissing. "What will Elspeth think?"

"Think, Lady Lilias!" said Elspeth bitterly; "think! I cannot think; but I can feel for the impropriety—the sinful levity—into which, for the first time, I see my mistress fallen."

The fair neck of Lilias crimsoned as she listened to the taunt. For a moment a frown gathered on her brow, before which the nurse's countenance fell; but it died away in a moment, and, with a beseeching smile, which lay nestled among rosy blushes, she stretched out her hand and said,—

"Forgive me, Elspeth, we are married!"

This brief annunciation had a striking effect on the individual to whom it was addressed. She clasped together her withered hands, and continued for a few moments gazing wildly in the faces of the startled pair, seemingly anxious to discover there some contradiction of what she had just heard; and then uttering a loud long shriek, dashed her face against the wooden board, and groaned audibly.

The terrified Lilias tried to raise the old woman's head from the table, but she for some time resisted the kindly effort. At length, raising her pale and now haggard features to those of the lady, she exclaimed,—

"Unsay, child of my affection, the dreadful tidings you have told;—tell me not that I have murdered the daughter of my mistress. Often when the *taish* was on me have I seen the dirk in your bosom. Little did I dream that my own hand should guide it there. Oh! say you are not married."

Lilias, who knew the violent temper of her nurse, and imagined her present ravings proceeded from offended pride at not having been made privy to the marriage, now attempted to soothe her feelings.

"Nay, my dear Elspeth, take not on so; you know Sir Maurice and I have long loved each other; to-morrow morning he rides to join Montrose, who has conquered for the king at Tippermuir. I tremble to be left behind, and have therefore resolved to accompany him; in these circumstances, was it not fitting that he should have a husband's title to protect me? 'Twas but this morning we were wedded; and I ever meant to tell you here."

"Here, said you?" replied the old woman, shuddering. "But I am guiltless. You were ordained to be the destruction of each other before the world was. James Graham will look long and wearily for your coming, I fear. Hush! the Campbells are about the house; and *he* is coming to seek you here."

"Who?—Sir Mungo Campbell?" said Lilias and her husband, in the same breath.

"Even he," replied Elspeth; "he brings the warrant of the Estates to apprehend Sir Maurice, and has orders from the Marquis of Argyle to secure your own person."

"Treacherous, infamous wretch!"—"Cruel, unkind Elspeth!" burst again simultaneously from the lips of Maurice and his bride.

"Upbraid me not, Lady Lilias: alas! what must fall will fall. Oh,

that you had trusted me. I fondly hoped that Sir Mungo Campbell might yet be your husband, and that I should see you the proud and happy mistress of Castle Lorn; but married!—he will water this floor with our blood!"

And again the wretched old woman, overcome with remorse and terror, shrieked aloud. Then, as if stung by some instantaneous and overpowering feeling, she hastily quitted the apartment. The betrayed and devoted pair gazed for a few minutes at each other in silent sadness. There was more of grief than terror in these mournful looks; for it was for the calamity of the other that each heart bled. At length the lady sunk, weeping, into his arms.

"Oh, Maurice, Maurice, bitterly are our fears fulfilled! We are lost! There is no escape from the bloodhounds who have beset us."

"Nay, nay, my love," replied the knight, feigning the tranquillity he did not feel; "think not so. I must have heard the arrival of the party, had we been yet surrounded. There still is time to escape from the net prepared for us. Once on horseback, between the darkness of the night, and the wild nature of these hills, we may manage to escape."

Ere Lilias could make answer to this cheering discourse, Elspeth entered the apartment.

"Haste!" she exclaimed in an emphatic whisper, "a moment yet is left. Sir Mungo has not arrived. Leave, oh leave, this fearful place!" and she wrung her hands impatiently.

The lovers lost no time in obeying this invitation. Two large riding-cloaks were supplied by Elspeth, in order to conceal their forms, if they should unhappily be met by Sir Mungo; while, still more to defeat detection, it was agreed that Lilias should mount the nurse's pony.

"And you, Elspeth," said the lady, with a kind-heartedness which no personal danger could destroy, "what shall become of you?"

"Fear not for me," replied Elspeth chokingly; "I fear nothing—fly!"

Maurice now led his lady to the open plain, and here saw, with sorrow, that the moon, which shone dazzlingly bright, would destroy almost every hope of escaping the recognition of Sir Mungo Campbell, should that individual meet them; and this was, alas! too soon to happen. They had only turned the angle of the building, with the intention of taking the hillward path, when they saw a band of armed men, at the head of whom stood one whom hatred and fear at once enabled both to pronounce the man they sought to shun.

"Who comes there?" cried Sir Mungo, harshly.

"Friends to King Charles," replied Maurice, undauntedly.

"That may well be," replied Campbell, "and yet deep foes to Scotland. Sir Maurice Ogilvy, I arrest thee of high treason!"

"Win me, and wear me, Roundhead!" cried the knight; and, throwing off the cloak which cumbered him, he drew his sword with one hand, while with the other he plucked Lilias from her seat, and placed her before him. Then giving the rowel to his horse, he dashed among the astonished Highlanders, who either fell before, or yielded a passage to the gallant steed.

A wild yell arose amid the stillness of the night, as the Campbells perceived the rapid pace at which Maurice rode, and which, if continued for a few minutes, must soon place him beyond the chance of capture, and matchlocks and pistols were employed in vain to interrupt his career. But, alas! Heaven had decreed the triumph of the guilty. Urged to his utmost speed, Rupert would soon have saved his master, and his yet more precious

load, when, his foot striking against a piece of earthfast rock, he stumbled —made a futile effort to recover himself —and at last fell on his side. Sir Maurice instantly sprung to his feet, but Lilias lay apparently lifeless on the turf. He kneeled down, and raised her in his arms, but she replied not to his eager questionings. He could feel no pulse, to tell him of returning life; and to his despair, he perceived the blood flowing profusely from her white brow.

"She is gone!" cried he, bitterly. "Now, Campbell, for thy heart;" and as he spoke, he lifted his weapon from the grass. He had hardly regained it, when he was surrounded by the Highlanders.

"Yield thee, Sir Maurice, or thou diest."

"Never to one of thy detested clan will Maurice Ogilvy give up his sword. Send back your murderers, Campbell, and let us settle here our long arrear of hatred."

"Once more I bid thee yield."

"Again do I defy thee."

"Thy blood be on thy head then. Smite the braggart to the dust."

The word was barely uttered when the upraised arm of one who stood behind the youth buried a dirk in his bosom. He reeled to the earth, tried with dimming eye to scan the features of Lilias as she lay still prostrate on the ground, and then casting his eyes upwards, murmured out, "Bear witness, Heaven, I die true to love, and faithful to the king!" A moment more, and he was silent.

Campbell next proceeded to raise the body of Lilias from the ground. It seemed as if her deep-rooted aversion to this person was so vital as even to govern her while in a state of insensibility; for no sooner had his fingers touched her waist, than she started from the ground, and, drawing her hands across her eyes, gazed wildly around. A moment sufficed to show her the cureless ruin which had befallen her hopes and happiness, and, bursting from the grasp of her hated suitor, and exclaiming in a voice hoarse in agony, "Stand off, monster! I am his wife!" she threw herself with reckless violence on the prostrate corpse. Even the heart of Campbell was touched by her extreme misery, and some minutes elapsed ere he could give directions for her removal. That was now needless. In her frantic despair, poor Lilias regarded death as an enviable blessing; the dagger of Maurice afforded her the ready means of escaping at once from all her worldly woe, and her cruel captors only raised her to discover that her heart's blood was now mingling on the same turf with that of him who had alone possessed her living love.

On the following morning, the wandering shepherds of the neighbourhood perceived a new-made grave in the churchyard of Saint Catherine, and a wretched being in female attire seated beside it. Hers was a grief "too deep for tears"—a sorrow too mighty for mortal alleviation. She spoke to no one, replied to no one, but continued, with her head resting on her lap, to spend the livelong day by the side of the unfortunates whom her well-meant treachery had stretched so untimely there. As the winter advanced, she grew weaker and weaker, but still she abstained not from her daily vigil. Even when, from debility, she was unable to walk, she prevailed on some one to carry her to the lonely cemetery; and her dying words to her pitying neighbours were—"Bury me at the feet of Lady Lilias—remember, at the feet."—*Edinburgh Literary Gazette.*

TRADITIONS OF THE CELEBRATED MAJOR WEIR.

By Robert Chambers, LL.D.

In one of the most ancient streets of Edinburgh, called the West Bow, stood the house formerly inhabited by Major Weir, whose name is scarcely more conspicuous in the Criminal Records of Scotland, than it is notorious in the mouth of popular tradition. The awful tenement was situated in a small court at the back of the main street, accessible by a narrow entry leading off to the east, about fifty yards from the top of the Bow. It was a sepulchral-looking fabric, with a peculiarly dejected and dismal aspect, as if it were conscious of the bad character which it bore among the neighbouring houses.

It is now about one hundred and fifty years since Major Weir, an old soldier of the civil war, and the bearer of some command in the City Guard of Edinburgh, closed a most puritanical life, by confessing himself a sorcerer, and being burnt accordingly at the stake. The scandal in which this involved the Calvinistic party seems to have been met, on their part, by an endeavour to throw the whole blame upon the shoulders of Satan; and this conclusion, which was almost justified by the mystery and singularity of the case, has had the effect of connecting the criminal's name inalienably with the demonology of Scotland.

Sundry strange reminiscences of Major Weir and his house are preserved among the old people of Edinburgh, and especially by the venerable gossips of the West Bow. It is said he derived that singular gift of prayer by which he surprised all his acquaintance, and procured so sanctimonious a reputation, from his walking-cane! This implement, it appears, the Evil One, from whom he procured it, had endowed with the most wonderful properties and powers. It not only inspired him with prayer, so long as he held it in his hand, but it acted in the capacity of a Mercury, in so far as it could go an errand, or run a message. Many was the time it went out to the neighbouring shops for supplies of snuff to its master! And as the fact was well known, the shopkeepers of the Bow were not startled at the appearance of so strange a customer. Moreover, it often "answered the door," when people came to call upon the Major, and it had not unfrequently been seen running along before him, in the capacity of link-boy, as he walked down the Lawnmarket. Of course, when the Major was burnt, his wooden lieutenant and valet was carefully burnt with him, though it does not appear in the Justiciary Records that it was included in the indictment, or that Lord Dirleton subjected it, in common with its master, to the ceremony of a sentence.

It is also said that the spot on which the Major was burnt,—namely, the south-east corner of the esplanade on the Castle-Hill,—continued ever after scathed and incapable of vegetation. But we must beg to suggest the possibility of this want of verdure being occasioned by the circumstance of the esplanade being a hard gravel-walk. We are very unwilling to find scientific reasons for last-century miracles,—to withdraw the veil from beautiful deceptions,—or to dispel the halo which fancy may have thrown around the incidents of a former day. But a regard for truth obliges us to acknowledge, that the same miracle, attributed to the burning-place of Wishart, at St Andrews, may be accounted for in a similar way, the spot

being now occupied by what the people thereabouts denominate, in somewhat homely phrase, "a mussel midden."

For upwards of a century after Major Weir's death, he continued to be the bugbear of the Bow, and his house remained uninhabited. His apparition was frequently seen at night flitting, like a black and silent shadow, about the purlieus of that singular street. His house, though known to be deserted by everything human, was sometimes observed at midnight to be full of lights, and heard to emit strange sounds, as of dancing, howling, and, what is strangest of all, spinning. It was believed, too, that every night, when the clock of St Giles tolled twelve, one of the windows sprung open, and the ghost of a tall woman in white, supposed to be the Major's equally terrible sister, came forward, and bent her long figure thrice over the window, her face every time touching the wall about three feet down, and then retired, closing the window after her with an audible clang.

Some people had occasionally seen the Major issue from the low "close," at the same hour, mounted on a black horse without a head, and gallop off in a whirlwind of flame. Nay, sometimes the whole of the inhabitants of the Bow together were roused from their sleep at an early hour in the morning, by the sound as of a coach-and-six, first rattling up the Lawnmarket, and then thundering down the Bow, stopping at the head of the terrible "close" for a few minutes, and then rattling and thundering back again,—being neither more nor less than Satan come in one of his best equipages, to take home to his abode the ghosts of the Major and his sister, after they had spent a night's leave of absence in their terrestrial dwelling. In support of these beliefs, circumstances, of course, were not awanting. One or two venerable men of the Bow, who had, perhaps, on the night of the 7th September 1736, popped their night-capped heads out of their windows, and seen Captain Porteous hurried down their street to execution, were pointed out by children as having actually witnessed some of the dreadful doings alluded to. One worthy, in particular, declared he had often seen coaches parading up and down the Bow at midnight, drawn by six black horses without heads, and driven by a coachman of the most hideous appearance, whose flaming eyes, placed at an immense distance from each other in his forehead, as they gleamed through the darkness, resembled nothing so much as the night-lamps of a modern vehicle.

About forty years ago, when the shades of superstition began universally to give way in Scotland, Major Weir's house came to be regarded with less terror by the neighbours, and an attempt was made by the proprietor to find a person who would be bold enough to inhabit it. Such a person was procured in William Patullo, a poor man of dissipated habits, who, having been at one time a soldier and a traveller, had come to disregard in a great measure the superstitions of his native country, and was now glad to possess a house upon the low terms offered by the landlord, at whatever risk. Upon it being known in the town that Major Weir's house was about to be re-inhabited, a great deal of curiosity was felt by people of all ranks as to the result of the experiment; for there was scarcely a native of the city who had not felt since his boyhood an intense interest in all that concerned that awful fabric, and yet remembered the numerous terrible stories which he had heard told respecting it. Even before entering upon his hazardous undertaking, William Patullo was looked upon with a flattering sort of interest—an interest similar to that which we feel respecting a culprit under sentence of death, a man about to be married, or a regiment on the march to active conflict. It was

the hope of many that he would be the means of retrieving a valuable possession from the dominion of darkness. But Satan soon let them know that he does not ever tamely relinquish the outposts of his kingdom.

On the very first evening after Patullo and his spouse had taken up their abode in the house, a circumstance took place which effectually deterred them and all others from ever again inhabiting it. About one in the morning, as the worthy couple were lying awake in their bed, not unconscious of a considerable degree of fear, a dim uncertain light proceeding from the gathered embers of their fire, and all being silent around them, they suddenly saw a form like that of a calf, but without the head, come through the lower panel of the door and enter the room. A spectre more horrible, or more spectre-like conduct, could scarcely have been conceived. The phantom immediately came forward to the bed; and setting its fore-feet upon the stock, looked steadfastly in all its awful headlessness at the unfortunate pair, who were of course almost ready to die with fright. When it had contemplated them thus for a few minutes, to their great relief it at length took away its intolerable person, and slowly retiring, gradually vanished from their sight. As might be expected, they deserted the house next morning; and from that time forward, no other attempt was ever made to embank this part of the world of light from the aggressions of the world of darkness.

In the course of our experience we have met with many houses in "Auld Reekie" which have the credit of being haunted. There is one at this day [1829] in Buchanan's Court, Lawnmarket, in the same "land" in which the celebrated editor of the *Edinburgh Review* first saw the light. It is a flat, and has been shut up from time immemorial. The story goes, that one night, as preparations were making for a supper party, something occurred which obliged the family, as well as all the assembled guests, to retire with precipitation, and lock up the house. From that night to this it has never once been opened, nor was any of the furniture withdrawn;—the very goose which was undergoing the process of being roasted at the time of the dreadful occurrence is still at the fire! No one knows to whom the house belongs; no one ever inquires after it; no one living ever saw the inside of it;—it is a condemned house! There is something peculiarly dreadful about a house under these circumstances. What sights of horror might present themselves if it were entered! Satan is the *ultimus hæres* of all such unclaimed property.

Besides the numberless old houses in Edinburgh that are haunted, there are many endowed with the simple credit of having been the scenes of murders and suicides. Some we have met with, containing rooms which had particular names commemorative of such events, and these names, handed down as they had been from one generation to another, usually suggested the remembrance of some dignified Scottish families, probably the former tenants of the houses.

The closed house in Mary King's Close (behind the Royal Exchange) is believed by some to have met with that fate for a very fearful reason. The inhabitants at a very remote period were, it is said, compelled to abandon it by the supernatural appearance which took place in it, on the very first night after they had made it their residence. At midnight, as the goodman was sitting with his wife by the fire, reading his Bible, and intending immediately to go to bed, a strange dimness which suddenly fell upon the light caused him to raise his eyes from the book. He looked at the candle, and saw it was burning blue. Terror took possession

of his frame. He turned away his eyes from the ghastly object; but the cure was worse than the disease. Directly before him, and apparently not two yards off, he saw the head as of a dead person looking him straight in the face. There was nothing but a head, though that seemed to occupy the precise situation in regard to the floor which it might have done had it been supported by a body of the ordinary stature. The man and his wife fainted with terror. On awaking, darkness pervaded the room. Presently the door opened, and in came a hand holding a candle. This advanced and stood—that is, the body supposed to be attached to the hand stood — beside the table, whilst the terrified pair saw two or three couples of feet skip along the floor, as if dancing. The scene lasted a short time, but vanished quite away upon the man gathering strength to invoke the protection of Heaven. The house was of course abandoned, and remained ever afterwards shut up.

THE WINDY YULE.

By John Galt.

It was in the course of the winter after the decease of Bailie M'Lucre, that the great loss of lives took place, which, everybody agreed, was one of the most calamitous things that had for many a year befallen the town.

Three or four vessels were coming with cargoes of grain from Ireland; another from the Baltic with Norway deals; and a third from Bristol, where she had been on a charter for some Greenock merchants.

It happened that, for a time, there had been contrary winds, against which no vessel could enter the port, and the ships whereof I have been speaking were all lying together at anchor in the bay, waiting a change of weather. These five vessels were owned among ourselves, and their crews consisted of fathers and sons belonging to the place, so that, both by reason of interest and affection, a more than ordinary concern was felt for them; for the sea was so rough, that no boat could live in it to go near them, and we had our fears that the men on board would be very ill off. Nothing, however, occurred but this natural anxiety, till the Saturday, which was Yule. In the morning the weather was blasty and sleety, waxing more and more tempestuous till about midday, when the wind checked suddenly round from the nor'-east to the sou'-west, and blew a gale as if the prince of the powers of the air was doing his utmost to work mischief. The rain blattered, the windows clattered, the shop-shutters flapped, pigs from the lum-heads came rattling down like thunder claps, and the skies were dismal both with cloud and carry. Yet, for all that, there was in the streets a stir and a busy visitation between neighbours, and every one went to their high windows, to look at the five poor barks that were warsling against the strong arm of the elements of the storm and the ocean.

Still the lift gloomed, and the wind roared, and it was as doleful a sight as ever was seen in any town afflicted with calamity to see the sailors' wives, with their red cloaks about their heads, followed by their hirpling and disconsolate bairns, going one after another to the kirkyard, to look at the vessels where

their helpless bread-winners were battling with the tempest. My heart was really sorrowful, and full of a sore anxiety to think of what might happen to the town, whereof so many were in peril, and to whom no human magistracy could extend the arm of protection. Seeing no abatement of the wrath of heaven, that howled and roared around us, I put on my big-coat, and taking my staff in my hand, having tied down my hat with a silk handkerchief, towards gloaming I walked likewise to the kirkyard, where I beheld such an assemblage of sorrow, as few men in a public situation have ever been put to the trial to witness.

In the lee of the kirk many hundreds of the town were gathered together; but there was no discourse among them. The major part were sailors' wives and weans, and at every new thud of the blast, a sob arose, and the mothers drew their bairns closer in about them, as if they saw the visible hand of a foe raised to smite them. Apart from the multitude, I observed three or four young lasses standing behind the Whinnyhill family's tomb, and I jaloused that they had joes in the ships; for they often looked to the bay, with long necks and sad faces, from behind the monument. A widow woman, one old Mary Weery, that was a lameter, and dependent on her son, who was on board the *Louping Meg* (as the Lovely Peggy was nicknamed at the shore), stood by herself, and every now and then wrung her hands, crying, with a woeful voice, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord;" —but it was manifest to all that her faith was fainting within her. But of all the piteous objects there, on that doleful evening, none troubled my thoughts more than three motherless children, that belonged to the mate of one of the vessels in the jeopardy. He was an Englishman that had been settled some years in the town, where his family had neither kith nor kin; and his wife having died about a month before, the bairns, of whom the eldest was but nine or so, were friendless enough, though both my gudewife, and other well-disposed ladies, paid them all manner of attention till their father would come home. The three poor little things, knowing that he was in one of the ships, had been often out and anxious, and they were then sitting under the lee of a headstone, near their mother's grave, chittering and creeping closer and closer at every squall. Never was such an orphan-like sight seen.

When it began to be so dark that the vessels could no longer be discerned from the churchyard, many went down to the shore, and I took the three babies home with me, and Mrs Pawkie made tea for them, and they soon began to play with our own younger children, in blithe forgetfulness of the storm. Every now and then, however, the eldest of them, when the shutters rattled and the lum-head roared, would pause in his innocent daffing, and cower in towards Mrs Pawkie, as if he was daunted and dismayed by something he knew not what.

Many a one that night walked the sounding shore in sorrow, and fires were lighted along it to a great extent; but the darkness and the noise of the raging deep, and the howling wind, never intermitted till about midnight: at which time a message was brought to me, that it might be needful to send a guard of soldiers to the beach, for that broken masts and tackle had come in, and that surely some of the barks had perished. I lost no time in obeying this suggestion, which was made to me by one of the owners of the *Louping Meg;* and to show that I sincerely sympathised with all those in affliction, I rose and dressed myself, and went down to the shore, where I directed several old boats to be drawn up by the fires, and blankets to be brought, and cordials to be prepared,

for them that might be spared with life to reach the land; and I walked the beach with the mourners till daylight.

As the day dawned, the wind began to abate in its violence, and to wear away from the sou'-west into the norit, but it was soon discovered that some of the vessels with the corn had perished; for the first thing seen was a long fringe of tangle and grain along the line of the high-water mark, and every one strained with greedy and grieved eyes, as the daylight brightened, to discover which had suffered. But I can proceed no further with the dismal recital of that doleful morning. Let it suffice here to be known, that, through the haze, we at last saw three of the vessels lying on their beam-ends with their masts broken, and the waves riding like the furious horses of destruction over them. What had become of the other two was never known; but it was supposed that they had foundered at their anchors, and that all on board perished.

The day being now Sabbath, and the whole town idle, everybody in a manner was down on the beach, to help and mourn as the bodies, one after another, were cast out by the waves. Alas! few were the better of my provident preparation, and it was a thing not to be described to see, for more than a mile along the coast, the new-made widows and fatherless bairns, mourning and weeping over the corpses of those they loved. Seventeen bodies were, before ten o'clock, carried to the desolated dwellings of their families; and when old Thomas Pull, the betheral, went to ring the bell for public worship, such was the universal sorrow of the town, that Nanse Donsie, an idiot natural, ran up the street to stop him, crying, in the voice of pardonable desperation, "Wha, in sic a time, can praise the Lord?"

GRIZEL COCHRANE.

CHAPTER I.

THE age which this noble woman adorned with her life and heroic actions was that gloomy one extending between the Restoration and Revolution (from 1660 to 1688), when the Scottish nation suffered under a cruel oppression, on account of their conscientious scruples respecting the existing forms of Church and State. Three insurrections, more bold than wise, marked the impatience of the Scots under this bloody rule; but it was with the last solely that Grizel Cochrane was connected.

Sir John Cochrane of Ochiltree, the father of our heroine, was the second son of the first Earl of Dundonald, and the ancestor of the present line of that noble and ingenious family. He was a distinguished friend of Sidney, Russell, and other illustrious men, who signalised themselves in England by their opposition to the court; and he had so long endeavoured in vain to procure some improvement in the national affairs, that he at length began to despair of his country altogether, and formed the design of emigrating to America. Having gone to London in 1683, with a view to a colonising expedition to South Carolina, he became involved in the deliberations of the Whig party, which at that time tended towards a general insurrection in England and Scotland, for the purpose of forcing an alteration of the royal councils, and the exclusion of the Duke of York

from the throne. In furtherance of this plan, Sir John pledged himself to assist the Earl of Argyle in raising the malcontents in Scotland. This earl was, if not the acknowledged head of the party in that kingdom, at least the man of highest rank who espoused its interests.

By the treachery of some of his subordinate agents, this design was detected prematurly; and while some were unfortunately taken and executed, among whom were Sidney and Lord Russell, the rest fled from the kingdom. Of the latter number were the Earl of Argyle, Sir John Cochrane, and Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth,—the last a patriot rivalling Cochrane in talent and purity of motives, and also, like him, destined to experience the devotedness of a daughter's love. The fugitives found safety in Holland, where they remained in peace till the death of Charles the Second, in February 1685, when the Duke of York, the object politically of their greatest detestation, became king. It was then determined to invade Scotland with a small force, to embody the Highland adherents of Argyle with the west country Presbyterians, and, marching into England, to raise the people as they moved along, and not rest till they had produced the desired melioration of the State.

The expedition sailed in May, but the Government was enabled to take such precautions as, from the very first, proved a complete frustration to their designs. Argyle lingered timidly in his own country, and finally, against the advice of Cochrane and Hume, who were his chief officers, made some unfortunate movements, which ended in the entire dissolution of his army, and his own capture and death. While this well-meaning but weak nobleman committed himself to a low disguise, in the vain hope of effecting his escape, Sir John Cochrane and Sir Patrick Hume headed a body of 200 men, formed out of the relics of the army, and bravely resolved, even with that small force, to attempt the accomplishment of their original intention—namely, a march into England. They accordingly crossed the Clyde into Renfrewshire, where they calculated on obtaining some reinforcement. The boats on this occasion being insufficient to transport the whole at once, the first party, headed by the two patriots, was obliged to contend, on the opposite bank of the river, with a large squadron of militia, while the boats returned for the remainder; after which the united force caused their opponents to retreat. The militia returned, however, in greater force, and renewed the assault at a place called Muirdykes, in the parish of Lochwinnoch. They were now commanded by Lord Ross and a Captain Clellan, and amounted to two troops, while Sir John Cochrane's men had decreased to seventy in number.

In this predicament they were called on by the royal troops to lay down their arms, and surrender themselves prisoners. But preferring the risk of death on the field to the tender mercies of a vindictive foe, they rejected the terms with disdain, and, entering a sheepfold, used its frail sod walls as a defence against the furious attack of the enemy, whom, after a keen conflict, in which every man fought hand to hand with his opponents, they at length succeeded in beating off, with the loss of their captain and some other men, while Lord Ross was wounded. Cochrane, however, soon after learned that the enemy was returning with a great reinforcement, and fearing that he could not much longer defend himself on the field, retired with his troops to a neighbouring wilderness or morass, where he dismissed them, with the request that each man would provide the best way he could for his own safety. For himself, having received two severe contusions in the body during the engagement, and being worn

out with fatigue, he sought refuge in the house of his uncle, Mr Gavin Cochrane of Craigmuir, who lived at no great distance from the place of encounter. This gentleman, however, as it unfortunately happened, had married a sister of the Captain Clellan killed in the late battle, and, filled with revenge for the death of her brother, this lady secretly informed against her guest, who was immediately seized and removed to Edinburgh, where, after being paraded through the streets, bound and bareheaded, and conducted by the common hangman, he was lodged in the Tolbooth on the 3d of July 1685, there to await his trial as a traitor. The day of trial came, and he was condemned to death, in spite of the most strenuous exertions of his aged father, the Earl of Dundonald, who, having received his title from the hands of Charles the Second, had, from motives of honour, never conspired against him.

Where is the tongue that can express all the secret and varied anguish that penetrates the yearning heart, when about to leave for ever the warm precincts of mortality, to quit the loving charities of life, and to have all the cords which bound it to existence suddenly torn asunder? Natural strength of mind may suffice to conceal much of this mortal conflict, or even to hide it altogether from the eye of the careless observer, but still it is at work within, and grapples in deadly struggle with the spirit.

Such was the state of Cochrane's mind on the night of his condemnation, when left once more to the gloomy solitude of his prison. It was not the parting stroke of death he feared, however sharp. He was a father, loving and beloved; and the thoughts of the sorrow his children were doomed to suffer on his account, wrung his heart, and burning tears, which his own fate could not have called forth, were shed for them. No friend or relative had been permitted to see him from the time of his apprehension; but it was now signified to him, that any of his family that he desired to communicate with might be allowed to visit him. Anxious, however, to deprive his enemies of an opportunity of an accusation against his sons, he immediately conveyed to them his earnest entreaties, and indeed commands, that they should refrain from availing themselves of this leave till the night before his execution. This was a sacrifice which it required his utmost fortitude to make; and it had left him to a sense of the most desolate loneliness, insomuch that when, late in the evening, he heard his prison door unlocked, he lifted not his eyes towards it, imagining that the person who entered could only be the jailer, who was particularly repulsive in his countenance and manner. What, then, was his surprise and momentary delight, when he beheld before him his only daughter, and felt her arms entwining his neck! Yet, when he looked on her face, and saw the expression it bore of mute despairing agony, more fearful than the most frantic manifestations of misery, and marked her pale cheeks, which no longer bloomed with the tints of health and happiness, and felt the cold dampness of her brow, he thought himself wrong for having given way for an instant to the joy her presence had created, and every other sensation fled before the fear of what might be the consequence to her of this interview. He had no sooner, however, expressed his feelings on this subject, than she became sensible that, in order to palliate his misery, she must put a strong curb upon her own, and in a short time was calm enough to enter into conversation with her father upon the dismal subject of his present situation, and to deliver a message from the old earl, her grandfather, by which he was informed that an appeal had been

made from him to the king, and means taken to propitiate Father Peters, his Majesty's confessor, who, it was well known, often dictated to him in matters of State. It appeared evident, however, by the turn which their discourse presently took, that neither father nor daughter was at all sanguine in their hopes from this negotiation. The Earl of Argyle had been executed but a few days before, as had also several of his principal adherents, though men of less consequence than Sir John Cochrane; and it was therefore improbable that he, who had been so conspicuously active in the insurrection, should be allowed to escape the punishment which it was now in their power to inflict. Besides all this, the treaty to be entered into with Father Peters would require some time to adjust, and meanwhile the arrival of the warrant for execution must every day be looked for.

Under these circumstances, several days passed, each of which found Miss Grizel Cochrane an inmate of her father's prison for as many hours as she was permitted. During these interviews of the father and daughter, while heart clung unto heart, they reaped all the consolation which an undisguised knowledge of the piety and courage of each could bestow. Still, after such intercourse, the parting scene which they anticipated seemed more and more dreadful to think of; and, as the daughter looked on the pale and dejected countenance of her parent, her bosom was penetrated with the sharpest pangs. The love of her father might be termed a component part of her nature. She had cherished this filial love ever since she possessed a consciousness of thought, and it was now strong and absorbing, in proportion to the danger in which he stood. Grizel Cochrane was only at that period eighteen years old; but it is the effect of such perilous times as those in which she lived to sober the reckless spirit of youth, and make men and women of children. She had, however, a natural strength of character, that would, on all extraordinary occasions, have displayed itself without such a tuition, and which, being now joined with what she conceived the necessity of the case, rendered her capable of a deed which has caused her history to vie with that of the most distinguished of heroines.

Ever since her father's condemnation, her daily and nightly thoughts had dwelt on the fear of her grandfather's communication with the king's confessor being rendered unavailable, for want of the time necessary for enabling the friends in London, to whom it was trusted, to make their application, and she boldly determined to execute a plan, whereby the arrival of the death warrant would be retarded. A short time, therefore, before it was expected by the council in Edinburgh, she thought it necessary, in her visit to her father, to mention that some urgent affair would prevent her from seeing him again for a few days. Alarmed at this, and penetrating her design of effecting somewhat in his favour, he warned her against attempting impossibilities.

"Nothing is impossible to a determined mind," said she; "and fear nothing for me."

"But the inexperience of youth, my child," he replied, "may involve you in danger and in blame; and did you but know the characters of those you must encounter, while vainly pleading for your father's life, you would fear, as I do, the sullying of your fair fame."

"I am a Cochrane, my father!" said the heroic girl—an answer how brief, but to him how expressive! He could say no more; he beheld in his child, so young, so beautiful, and so self-devoted, all the virtues of her race combined, and he felt for the moment that the courage she had prayed for would be granted to carry her through the undertaking she meditated, what-

ever that might be. She felt grateful to her father that he did not urge her further; but she trembled as she turned, at her departure, to catch another look of those loved and venerated features; for his eye appeared to be following her with a parting expression, which seemed to say it was the last fond look.

CHAPTER II.

AT that time horses were used as a mode of conveyance so much more than carriages, that almost every gentlewoman had her own steed, and Miss Cochrane, being a skilful rider, was possessed of a well-managed palfrey, on whose speed and other qualities she had been accustomed to depend. On the morning after she had bid her father farewell, long ere the inhabitants of Edinburgh were astir, she found herself many miles on the road to the Borders. She had taken care to attire herself in a manner which corresponded with the design of passing herself off for a young serving-woman journeying on a borrowed horse to the house of her mother in a distant part of the country; and by only resting at solitary cottages, where she generally found the family out at work, save perhaps an old woman or some children, she had the good fortune, on the second day after leaving Edinburgh, to reach in safety the abode of her old nurse, who lived on the English side of the Tweed, four miles beyond the town of Berwick. In this woman she knew she could place implicit confidence, and to her, therefore, revealed her secret. She was resolved, she said, to make an attempt to save her father's life, by stopping the postman, an equestrian like herself, and forcing him to deliver up his bags, in which she expected to find the fatal warrant. Singular as such a determination may appear in a delicate young woman, especially if we consider that she was aware of the arms always carried by the man to whose charge the mail was committed, it is nevertheless an undoubted fact that such was her resolve. In pursuance of this design, she had brought with her a brace of small pistols, together with a horseman's cloak tied up in a bundle, and hung on the crutch of her saddle; and now borrowed from her nurse the attire of her foster-brother, which, as he was a slight-made lad, fitted her reasonably well.

At that period, all those appliances which at this day accelerate the progress of the traveller were unknown, and the mail from London, which now arrives in about ten hours, took eight days in reaching the Scottish capital. Miss Cochrane thus calculated on a delay of sixteen or seventeen days in the execution of her father's sentence—a space of time which she deemed amply sufficient to give a fair trial to the treaty set on foot for his liberation. She had, by means which it is unnecessary here to detail, possessed herself of the most minute information with regard to the places at which the postmen rested on their journey, one of which was a small public-house, kept by a widow woman, on the outskirts of the little town of Belford. There the man who received the bag at Durham was accustomed to arrive about six o'clock in the morning, and take a few hours' repose before proceeding farther on his journey.* In pursuance of the plan laid down by Miss Cochrane, she

* Lest it should appear at issue with probability that the postman should thus "take his ease at his inn," it may be mentioned, as a fact defying all question, that this official, at a period much later, used sometimes to dismount on a muir, near the place here mentioned, and partake of a game at quoits, or other sports which might be proceeding by the wayside.

arrived at this inn about an hour after the man had composed himself to sleep, in the hope of being able, by the exercise of her wit and dexterity, to ease him of his charge.

Having put her horse into the stable, which was a duty that devolved on the guests at this little change-house, from its mistress having no ostler, she entered the only apartment which the house afforded, and demanded refreshment.

"Sit down at the end of that table," said the old woman, "for the best I have to give you is there already; and be pleased, my bonnie man, to make as little noise as ye can, for there's ane asleep in that bed that I like ill to disturb."

Miss Cochrane promised fairly; and after attempting to eat some of the viands, which were the remains of the sleeping man's meal, she asked for some cold water.

"What!" said the old dame, as she handed it to her; "ye are a water-drinker, are ye? It's but an ill custom for a change-house."

"I am aware of that," replied her guest; "and therefore, when in a public-house, I always pay for it the price of the stronger potation, which I cannot take."

"Indeed!—well, that is but just," said the landlady; "and I think the more of you for such reasonable conduct."

"Is the well where you get this water near at hand?" said the young lady; "for if you will take the trouble to bring me some from it, as this is rather warm, it shall be considered in the lawing."

"It is a good bit off," responded the landlady; "but I cannot refuse to fetch some for such a civil, discreet lad, and will be as quick as I can; but, for any sake, take care and don't meddle with these pistols," she continued, pointing to a pair of pistols on the table, "for they are loaded, and I am always terrified for them."

Saying this, she disappeared; and Miss Cochrane, who would have contrived some other errand for her, had the well been near, no sooner saw the door shut, than she passed, with trembling eagerness, and a cautious but rapid step, to the place where the man lay soundly sleeping, in one of those close wooden bedsteads common in the houses of the poor, the door of which was left half open to admit the air, and which she opened still wider, in the hope of seeing the mail-bag, and being able to seize upon it. But what was her dismay when she beheld only a part of the integument which contained what she would have sacrificed her life a thousand times to obtain, just peeping out from below the shaggy head and brawny shoulders of its keeper, who lay in such a position upon it as to give not the smallest hope of its extraction without his being aroused from his nap.

A few bitter moments of observation served to convince her that possession of this treasure must be obtained in some other way; and, again closing the door of the bed, she approached the pistols, and having taken them from the holsters, she as quickly as possible drew the loading, which having secreted, she then returned them to their cases, and resumed her seat at the foot of the table. She had barely time to recover from the agitation into which the fear of the man's awakening during her recent occupation had thrown her, when the old woman returned with the water; and having taken a draught, of which she stood much in need, she settled her account much to her landlady's content, by paying for the water the price of a pot of beer. Having then carelessly asked and ascertained how much longer the other guest was likely to continue his sleep, she left the house, and mounting her horse, set

off at a trot, in a different direction from that in which she had arrived.

Making a compass of two or three miles, she once more fell into the high road between Belford and Berwick, where she walked her horse gently on, awaiting the coming up of the postman. Though all her facultics were now absorbed in one aim, and the thought of her father's deliverance still reigned supreme in her mind, yet she could not help occasionally figuring to herself the possibility of her tampering with the pistols being discovered, and their loading replaced, in which case it was more than likely that her life would be the forfeit of the act she meditated. A woman's fears would still intrude, notwithstanding all her heroism, and the glorious issue which promised to attend the success of her enterprise. When she at length saw and heard the postman advancing behind her, the strong necessity of the case gave her renewed courage; and it was with perfect coolness that, on his coming close up, she civilly saluted him, put her horse into the same pace with his, and rode on for some way in his company. He was a strong, thick-set fellow, with a good-humoured countenance, which did not seem to Miss Cochrane, as she looked anxiously upon it, to savour much of hardy daring. He rode with the mail-bags (for there were two—one containing the letters direct from London, and the other those taken up at the different post-offices on the road) strapped firmly to his saddle in front, close to the holsters. After riding a short distance together, Miss Cochrane deemed it time, as they were nearly half-way between Belford and Berwick, to commence her operations. She therefore rode nearly close to her companion, and said, in a tone of determination,—

"Friend, I have taken a fancy for those mail-bags of yours, and I must have them; therefore, take my advice, and deliver them up quietly, for I am provided for all hazards. I am mounted, as you see, on a fleet steed; I carry fire-arms; and, moreover, am allied with those who are stronger, though not bolder than myself. You see yonder wood," she continued, pointing to one at the distance of about a mile, with an accent and air which was meant to carry intimidation with it; "again, I say, take my advice; give me the bags, and speed back the road you came for the present, nor dare to approach that wood for at least two or three hours to come."

There was in such language from a stripling something so surprising that the man looked on Miss Cochrane for an instant in silent and unfeigned amazement.

"If you mean, my young master," said he, as soon as he found his tongue, "to make yourself merry at my expense, you are welcome. I am no sour churl to take offence at the idle words of a foolish boy. But if," he said, taking one of the pistols from the holster, and turning its muzzle towards her, "ye are mad enough to harbour one serious thought of such a matter, I am ready for you. But, methinks, my lad, you seem at an age when robbing a garden or an old woman's fruit-stall would befit you better, if you must turn thief, than taking his Majesty's mails upon his own highway, from such a stout man as I am. Be thankful, however, that you have met with one who will not shed blood if he can help it, and sheer off before you provoke me to fire."

"Nay," said his young antagonist, "I am not fonder of bloodshed than you are; but if you will not be persuaded, what can I do? for I have told you a truth, *that mail I must and will have.* So now choose," she continued, as she drew one of the small pistols from under her cloak, and deliberately cocking it, presented it in his face.

"Then your blood be upon your own head," said the fellow, as he raised his

hand, and fired his pistol, which, however, only flashed in the pan. Dashing this weapon to the ground, he lost not a moment in pulling out the other, which he also aimed at his assailant, and fired with the same result. In a transport of rage and disappointment, the man sprung from his horse, and made an attempt to seize her; but by an adroit use of her spurs she eluded his grasp, and placed herself out of his reach. Meanwhile his horse had moved forward some yards, and to see and seize the advantage presented by this circumstance was one and the same to the heroic girl, who, darting towards it, caught the bridle, and having led her prize off about a hundred yards, stopped while she called to the thunderstruck postman to remind him of her advice about the wood. She then put both horses to their speed, and on turning to look at the man she had robbed, had the pleasure of perceiving that her mysterious threat had taken effect, and he was now pursuing his way back to Belford.

Miss Cochrane speedily entered the wood to which she had alluded, and tying the strange horse to a tree, out of all observation from the road, proceeded to unfasten the straps of the mail. By means of a sharp penknife, which set at defiance the appended locks, she was soon mistress of the contents, and with an eager hand broke open the Government dispatches, which were unerringly pointed out to her by their address to the council in Edinburgh, and their imposing weight and broad seals of office. Here she found not only the warrant for her father's death, but also many other sentences inflicting different degrees of punishment on various delinquents. These, however, it may be readily supposed, she did not then stop to examine; she contented herself with tearing them into small fragments, and placing them carefully in her bosom.

The intrepid girl now mounted her steed, and rode off, leaving all the private papers as she had found them, imagining—what eventually proved the case—that they would be discovered ere long, from the hints she had thrown out about the wood, and thus reach their proper places of destination. She now made all haste to reach the cottage of her nurse, where, having not only committed to the flames the fragments of the dreaded warrant, but also the other obnoxious papers, she quickly resumed her female garments, and was again, after this manly and daring action, the simple and unassuming Miss Grizel Cochrane. Leaving the cloak and pistols behind her, to be concealed by her nurse, she again mounted her horse, and directed her flight towards Edinburgh, and by avoiding as much as possible the high road, and resting at sequestered cottages, as she had done before (and that only twice for a couple of hours each time), she reached town early in the morning of the next day.

It must now suffice to say that the time gained by the heroic act above related was productive of the end for which it was undertaken, and that Sir John Cochrane was pardoned, at the instigation of the king's favourite counsellor, who interceded for him in consequence of receiving a bribe of five thousand pounds from the Earl of Dundonald. Of the feelings which on this occasion filled the heart of his courageous and devoted daughter, we cannot speak in adequate terms; and it is perhaps best at any rate to leave them to the imagination of the reader. The state of the times was not such for several years as to make it prudent that her adventure should be publicly known; but after the Revolution, when the country was at length relieved from persecution and danger, and every man was at liberty to speak of the trials he had undergone, and the expedients by which he had mastered them, her heroism was neither unknown nor un-

approved. Miss Cochrane afterwards married Mr Ker of Moriston, in the county of Berwick; and there can be little doubt that she proved equally affectionate and amiable as a wife, as she had already been dutiful and devoted as a daughter.—*Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.*

THE FATAL PRAYER.

THE village of Gourock is situated on the shore of a fine bay, about two miles from the town of Greenock. I was taken with the pleasantness of its situation, when one day viewing it at a little distance on the Greenock road, and sat down on the dyke by the roadside to enjoy the prospect at my leisure.

Presently an elderly man, of a grave aspect and a maritime appearance, passing slowly along the road, came and sat down near the same place. I guessed him to be one of the better class of fishermen, who had purchased, with the toil of his youth and his manhood, a little breathing-time to look about him in the evening of his days, ere the coming of night. After the usual salutations, we fell into discourse together, and I found him to be a man who had looked well about him in his pilgrimage, and reasoned on things and feelings—not living as the brutes that perish. After a pause in the conversation, he remarked, to my thinking, in a disjointed manner—

"Is it not strange, sir, that the thoughts that sometimes come into the brain of a man sleeping or waking—like a wind that blows across his bosom, coming he knows not whence, and going he knows not whither—leave behind them an impression and a feeling, and become the springs of human action, and mingle in the thread of human destiny?"

"Strange, indeed," said I. "What you say has more than once occurred to me; but being unable to reason satisfactorily on the subject, I set down altogether such ideas as having no better foundation than the fears and superstitions of the ignorant. But it seems to me that your remark, though of a general nature, must have been made in mental reference to some particular thing; and I would fain crave to know what it is."

"You are right," said he; "I was thinking at the moment of something which has sat, for some days past, like a millstone on my mind: and I will tell it to you with pleasure."

So I edged myself closer to him on the stones, that I might hear the better; and without more ado he began to discourse as follows:

"About six months ago, a wedding took place in the village, and a more comely and amiable couple never came together. Mr Douglas, though the son of a poor man, had been an officer in the army,—an ensign, I believe,—and when his regiment was disbanded, he came to live here on his half-pay, and whatever little else he might have. Jeanie Stuart at the time was staying with an uncle, one of our own folk, her parents having both been taken away from her; and she made up, as far as she could, for her board, by going in the summer season to sew in the families that come from the great towns for the sea-bathing. So gentle she was, and so calm in her deportment, and so fair to look on withal, that even these nobility of the loom and the sugar-hogshead thought it no dishonour to have her among them: and uncon-

sciously, as it were, they treated her just as if she had been of the same human mould with themselves.

"Well, they soon got acquainted,—our Jeanie and Mr Douglas,—and drew kindly together; and the end of it was they were married. They lived in a house there, just beyond the point that you may see forms the opposite angle of the bay, not far from a place called Kempock; and Mr Douglas just employed himself, like any of us, in fishing and daundering about, and mending his nets, and such like. Jeanie was the happy woman now, for she had aye a mind above the commonality; and, I am bold to say, thought her stay long enough among these would-be gentry, where she sat many a wearisome day for no use, and would fain have retired from their foolishness into the strength and greenness of her own soul. But now she had a companion and an equal, and indeed a superior; for Mr Douglas had seen the world, and had read both books and men, and could wile away the time in discoursing of what he had seen and heard tell of in foreign lands, among strange people and unknown tongues. And Jeanie listened, and listened, and thought her husband the first of mankind. She clung to him as the honeysuckle clings to the tree: his pleasure was her pleasure—his sorrow was her sorrow—his bare word was her law.

"One day, about two weeks ago, she appeared dull and dispirited, and complained of a slight headache; on which Mr Douglas advised her to go to bed and rest herself awhile; which she said she would do; and having some business in the village he went out. On coming back, however, in the forenoon, he found her just in the same spot, leaning her head on her hand; but she told him she was better, and that it was nothing at all. He then began to get his nets ready, saying he was going out with some lads of the village to the deep-sea fishing, and would be back the next day. She looked at him, but said nothing; long and strangely she looked, as if wondering what he was doing, and not understanding anything that was going on. But finally when he came to kiss her and bid her good-bye, she threw her arms round him, and when he would have gone she held him fast, and her bosom heaved as if her heart would break; but still she said nothing.

"'What can be the matter with you, Jeanie?' said Mr Douglas.

"'Stay with me to-day,' said she at last; 'depart not this night, just this one night—it is not much to ask—to-morrow you may go where you please, and I will not be your hindrance a moment.'

"But Mr Douglas was vexed at such folly, and she could answer nothing to his questions, except that a thought had come into her head, and she could not help it. So he was resolved to go, and kissing her fondly, he threw his nets on his shoulders and went away.

"For some minutes after his departure Jeanie did not move from the spot, but stood looking at the door whence he had gone out, and then began to tremble all over like the leaf of a tree. At length, coming to herself with a start, she knelt down, and throwing back her hair from her forehead, turned her face up towards heaven, and prayed with a loud voice to the Almighty, that she 'might have her husband in her arms that night.' For some moments she remained motionless and silent in the same attitude, till at length a sort of brightness, resembling a calm smile, passed over her countenance like a gleam of sunshine on the smooth sea, and bending her head low and reverently, she rose up. She then went as usual about her household affairs, and appeared not anything discomposed, but as tranquil and happy as if nothing had happened.

"Now the weather was fine and calm in the morning, but towards the afternoon it came on to blow; and indeed the air had been so sultry all day, that the seafarers might easily tell there would be a racket of the elements before long. As the wind, however, had been rather contrary, it was supposed that the boats could not have got far enough out to be in the mischief, but would put back when they saw the signs in the sky. But in the meantime the wind increased, till towards night it blew as hard a gale as we have seen in these parts for a long time. The ships out there, at the Tail of the Bank, were driven from their moorings, and two of them stranded on their beam ends on the other side; every stick and stitch on the sea made for any port they could find; and as the night came on in darkness and thunder, it was a scene that might cow even hearts that had been brought up on the water as if it was their proper element, and been familiar with the voice of the tempest from their young days. There was a sad lamenting and murmuring then, among the women folk especially—them that were kith or kin to the lads on the sea; and they went to one another's houses in the midst of the storm and the rain, and put in their pale faces through the darkness, as if searching for hope and comfort, and drawing close to one another like a flock of frightened sheep in their fellowship of grief and fear. But there was one who stirred not from her house, and who felt no terror at the shrieking of the night-storm, and sought for no comfort in the countenance of man—and that was the wife of Mr Douglas. She sometimes, indeed, listened to the howling of the sea that came by fits on her ear like the voice of the water-kelpie, and starting would lay down her work for a moment; but then she remembered the prayer she had prayed to Him who holds the reins of the tempest in His hands, and who says to the roaring waters, 'Be still,' and they are still—and the glorious balm she had felt to sink into her heart at that moment of high and holy communion, even like the dew of heaven on a parched land. So her soul was comforted, and she said to herself, 'God is not a man that He can lie;' and she rested on His assurance as on a rock, and laughed to scorn the tremblings of her woman's bosom. For why? The anchor of her hope was in heaven, and what earthly storm was so mighty as to remove it? Then she got up, and put the room in order, and placed her husband's slippers to air at the fireside; and stirred up the fuel, and drew in the armchair for her weary and storm-beaten mariner. Then would she listen at the door, and look out into the night for his coming; but she could hear no sound save the voice of the waters, and the roar of the tempest, as it rushed along the deep. She re-entered the house, and walked to and fro in the room with a restless step, but an unblenched cheek.

"At last the neighbours came to her house, knowing that her husband was one of those who had gone out that day, and told her that they were going to walk down towards the Clough, even in the mirk hour, to try if they could not hear some news of the boats. So she went with them, and we all walked together along the road—women and men, it might be, some twenty or thirty of us. But it was remarked, that though she came not hurriedly nor in fear, yet she had not even thrown her cloak on her shoulders, to defend her from the night air, but came forth with her head uncovered, and in her usual raiment of white, like a bride to the altar. As we passed along, it must have been a strange sight to see so many pale faces by the red glare of the torches they carried, and to hear so many human wailings filling up the pauses of the storm; but at the head of our melancholy procession there was a calm heart and a firm step, and

they were Jeanie's. Sometimes, indeed, she would look back, as some cry of womanish foreboding from behind would smite on her ear, and strange thoughts would crowd into her mind; and once she was heard to mutter—if her prayer had but saved her husband to bind some other innocent victim to the mysterious altar of wrath! And she stopped for a moment, as if in anguish at the wild imagination.

"But now as we drew nearer the rocks where the lighthouse is built, sounds were heard distinctly on the shore, and we waved the torches in the air, and gave a great shout, which was answered by known voices—for they were some of our own people—and our journey was at an end. A number of us then went on before, and groped our way among the rocks as well as we could in the darkness; but a woful tale met our ear; for one of the boats had been shattered to pieces while endeavouring to land there, and when he went down they were just dragging the body of a comrade, stiff and stark, from the sea. When the women behind heard of this, there was a terrible cry of dismay, for no one knew but it might be her own husband, son, or brother; and some who carried lights dropped them from fear, and others held them trembling to have the terrors of their hearts confirmed.

"There was one, however, who stood calm and unmoved by the side of the dead body. She spoke some words of holy comfort to the women, and they were silent at her voice. She then stepped lightly forward, and took a torch from the trembling hand that held it, and bent down with it beside the corpse. As the light fell one moment on her own fair face, it showed no signs of womanish feeling at the sight and touch of mortality; a bright and lovely bloom glowed on her cheek, and a heavenly lustre beamed in her eye; and as she knelt there, her white garments and long dark hair floating far on the storm, there was that in her look which drew the gaze even of that terrified group from the object of their doubt and dread. The next moment the light fell on the face of the dead—the torch dropped from her hand, and she fell upon the body of her husband! *Her prayer was granted.* She held her husband in her arms that night, and although no struggles of parting life were heard or seen, she died on his breast."

When the fisherman had concluded his story—and after some observations were made by us both, touching the mysterious warning, joined with a grateful acknowledgment that the stroke of death might be as often dealt in mercy as in wrath—we shook hands; and asking one another's names, as it might so fortune that we should once more, in the course of our earthly pilgrimage, be within call of one another, the old man and I parted, going each his several way.—*Literary Melange.*

GLENMANNOW, THE STRONG HERDSMAN.

By William Bennet.

Duke James of Queensberry, like others of our nobility and gentry, resided during a part of the year in London; and on one of his visits to the metropolis, he and a party of friends happened to have a match at discus, or, as it is more commonly called, "putting the stone." Several adepts

happened to be of the party, who boasted much of their superior strength and adroitness, and after making one of their best throws, offered to stake a large sum that not one of their companions knew of or could find a person to match it.

"The throw is certainly a good one," said the Duke of Queensberry; "yet I think it were easy to find many champions of sufficient muscle to show us a much better. I myself have a homely unpractised herdsman in Scotland, on whose head I will stake the sum you mention, that he shall throw the quoit fully two yards over the best of you."

"Done! produce your man!" was the reply of all; and the duke accordingly lost no time in dispatching a letter to one of his servants at Drumlanrig, ordering him to set out immediately on its receipt for Glenmannow, and to come with honest John M'Call to London without delay.

The duke's letter with Glenmannow was not less absolute than the order of an emperor. He wondered, but never thought of demurring; and without any further preparation than clothing himself in his Sunday's suit, and giving Mally his wife a few charges about looking to the hill in his absence, he assumed his large staff, and departed with the servant for "Lunnun."

On his arrival, the duke informed him of the purpose for which he had been sent, and desired that on the day, and at the hour appointed, he should make his appearance along with one of his servants, who knew perfectly the back streets and by-lanes of London, and who, after he should have decided the bet, would conduct him immediately in safety from the ground, as it was not improbable that his appearance and performance might attract a crowd and lead to unpleasant consequences. When the day arrived, the party assembled and proceeded to the ground, where, to the duke's surprise, though not to his terror, his crafty opponents chose a spot directly in front of a high wall, and at such a distance that the best of their party should pitch the quoit exactly to the foot of it; so that their antagonist, to make good the duke's boast of "two yards over them," should be obliged to exceed them those two yards in height, instead of straight forward distance. This implied such an effort as amounted in their minds to a physical impossibility; and as the duke, from having neglected to specify the particular nature of the ground, could not legally object to this advantage, they looked upon the victory as already their own.

The quoit chosen was a large ball of lead, and already had the champion of the party tossed it to the wall, and demanded of the duke to produce the man appointed to take it up. His grace's servant, who fully comprehended the instructions given to him, entered at this crisis with the 'buirdly' and, to them, uncouth Glenmannow. His appearance attracted no small notice, and even merriment; but the imperturbable object of it regarded the whole scene with the indifference peculiar to his character; and, with his mind fixed only upon the great end for which he was there, requested to be shown the quoit, and the spots from which and to where it had been thrown. This demand was soon complied with, and while he assumed his station, with the quoit in his hand, the duke whispered in his ear the deception which had been practised, and urged him to exert his whole force in order to render it unavailing.

"Will you throw off your coat? It will give you more freedom," said his Grace in conclusion.

"My coat! Na, na; nae coats aff wi' me for this silly affair," replied he. "I thocht it had been some terrible throw or ither that thae chaps had

made, when I was ca'ed for 'a' the way to Lunnun to see to gang ayont them; but if this be a', I wadna hae meaned ye to hae done't yoursel." Then poising the ball for a little in his hand, and viewing it with an air of contempt, "There!" said he, tossing it carelessly from him into the air, "he that likes may gang and fetch it back."

The ball, as if shot from the mouth of a cannon, flew on in a straight line completely over the wall, and alighted on the roof of a house at some distance beyond it. Its weight and velocity forced it through the tiles, and with a crash which immediately caused the house to be evacuated by its inmates, it penetrated also the garret floor, and rolled upon that of the next storey. An instantaneous hubbub ensued,—the party staring at each other in silence, and the crowd swearing it was the devil! but the servant knew his duty, and in a twinkling Glenmannow was no longer amongst them.

His Grace, after paying for the damage done to the house, conducted the whole party to his residence, there to discharge their forfeit, and to gaze upon the prodigy by whom they were vanquished. Glenmannow was well rewarded for his trouble and loss of time in journeying to London; and, over and above the immediate bounty of his Grace, he returned to his honest Mally with a discharge for one year's rent of the farm in his pocket.

One summer, during his Grace's residence at Drumlanrig, his friend the Duke of Buccleuch, who was at that time colonel of a regiment of fencibles, happened to be passing between Dumfries and Sanquhar with a company of his grenadiers; and having made Thornhill a station for the night, he went and billeted himself upon his Grace of Queensberry, by whom he was received with a hearty welcome. The two friends deeming one night's intercourse too short, and Buccleuch's marching orders not being peremptory in regard to time, it was agreed between them that they should spend the two succeeding days together, and that the soldiers, during that period, should be distributed among the tenantry around the castle.

Buccleuch, though a personal stranger to Glenmannow, was no stranger to his fame; and it was contrived between them, that a few of the grenadiers should be dispatched to beat up his quarters, and endeavour to force themselves upon him as his guests. Six of the stoutest were accordingly selected for this purpose, and after being told the character of the person to whom they were sent, and the joke which was intended to follow it, they received a formal billet, and set out for their destination. Their orders were to enter the house in a seemingly rough manner, to find fault with everything, to quarrel with Glenmannow, and endeavour, if possible, to overpower and bind him; but not on any account to injure either his person or effects in even the slightest degree. The soldiers, their commander knew, were arch fellows, and would acquit themselves in the true spirit of their instructions.

In those days few roads, excepting footpaths,—and those frequently too indistinctly marked to be traced by a stranger,—existed in the interior parts of the country. The soldiers, therefore, experienced no small difficulty in marshalling their way around the slope of the huge Cairnkinnow, in evading bogs and brakes, leaping burns and march dykes, and in traversing all the heights and hollows which lay between them and their secluded bourne. But the toils of their journey were more than compensated by the pleasures of it, for the pilgrim must possess little of either fancy or feeling, who could wander without delight amid the wild scenery of that mountainous district. When the

top of Glenquhargen is reached, and the bottom of the Glen of Scaur is beheld far, far beneath your feet; when the little river, which gives to the glen its name, is seen, descending from the hills, like an infant commencing the journey of life, into the long level holm which spreads its bosom to receive it; when, after descending, the eyes are cast around on its amphitheatre of Alpine hills, arrayed in "the brightness of green," and on the clouds that slumber, or the mists that curl along their summits; and when the head is thrown backward to contemplate the rocky peak of Glenquhargen, with the hawk, the gled, and the raven whirling, screaming, and croaking around it, that individual were dull and despicable indeed whose spirit would not fly forth and mingle, and identify itself, as it were, with the grand and the beautiful around him.

In a truly picturesque situation, on the side of one of the most northern of those hills, the soldiers beheld the house of Glenmannow. It was a low, thatch-roofed building, with a peat-stack leaning against one gable, and what might well be denominated a hut, which served for barn, byre, and stable, attached to the other; while a short way farther up the hill stood a round bucht, in which, upon occasion, the sturdy tenant was in the habit of penning his flock. A more modern structure has now been reared in the immediate vicinity of Glenmannow's domicile; yet in the beginning of the present century some vestiges of the ancient one were still remaining.

It was nearly noon when the party arrived in the "door-step;" yet at that late hour they found Mally busied in making a quantity of milk porridge for her own and her husband's breakfast, who had not yet returned from his morning visit to the hill. The appearance of soldiers in so sequestered a spot was to her a matter of scarcely less surprise than was that of the Spaniards to the simple Indians, on their first landing upon the shores of the New World. Soldiers, too, are generally objects of terror in such places, where their names are associated in the minds of the peasantry only with ideas of oppression and of slaughter; and at the period referred to, this feeling was in much greater force than at present. Poor Mally endeavoured as much as possible to conceal her fears and embarrassment, and with all the politeness she was mistress of, desired the party to be seated. Her artifice, however, was far from equalling their penetration: they soon remarked her timorous side-glances and hesitating manner, as she walked backward and forward through the house; and they therefore resolved to divert themselves a little by working upon her prejudices.

"That bayonet of mine," said one of the fellows, "will never be as clear again, I am afraid. The blood of that old herd, whom we did away with as we came, sticks confoundedly to it."

Mally was at this moment dishing the porridge in two *goans*, one for herself and another for John, and on hearing this horrible annunciation, she made a dead pause, and letting go the foot of the pot, suffered it to fall to its perpendicular with a bang which forced the cleps out of her hand, and precipitated the whole, with a large quantity of undished porridge, to the floor.

"If we do any more such tricks to-day," continued another wag, "I shall wipe mine well before the blood dries upon it, and then it will not rust as yours has done."

Mally, regardless of the porridge she had spilt, now stepped with cautious, but quick and trembling steps to the door. Before she had reached the threshold—

"Come," cried the soldier who had thus spoken, "let us taste this food which the mistress has been preparing.

Good woman, return and give us spoons. No flinching! We won't harm you, unless you provoke us to it. Why do you hesitate? Are you unwilling to part with your victuals? By my faith! the walk we have had this morning has given us such appetites, that if you are not active, we shall have a slice off yourself!"

"O mercy!" cried Mally, staring wildly, "hae patience a wee, an I'se gie ye ocht that's in the house; but dinna meddle wi' that goanfu' o' porridge, I beseech ye. They're our John's; and if he comes frae the hill, and finds them suppet, he'll brain some o' ye, as sure as I'm livin'."

She then made for the cupboard, and began to draw from thence bread, butter, and cheese; but the rogues, on hearing that John was so partial to his porridge, deemed this opportunity of arousing his ire too favourable to be lost, and they therefore insisted on being accommodated with spoons in order to "scart the coggie." Mally was obliged reluctantly to hand each a spoon from the wicker-creel which hung in the corner, and the six fellows were just in the act of devouring the contents of the goan, when honest Glenmannow made his appearance.

"What's a' this?" were his first words, on entering and perceiving such a bevy of red-coats.

"Why, honest man, we have got a billet upon you," said one of them.

"A billet! Wha frae?"

"From the Duke of Queensberry, with whom our colonel, the Duke of Buccleuch, is stopping at present. We are just arrived; it was a deuced long walk; we were very hungry, and are just making free with your breakfast, until something better be prepared for us."

"Ye're makin' mair free than welcome, I doubt, my lads. I hae nae objection, since our juke has sent ye, to gie ye a nicht's quarters, an' to let ye live on the best we can afford; but I think ye micht hae haen mair mense than to fa' on my parritch that way, like a wheen collies."

"Like what? Hold your peace, sir," thundered the whole at once. "We are upon the king's service, and have a right to what we please, wherever we are billeted."

"For a' sakes, John, let them alane!" cried Mally, who, saw the tempest that was gathering on her husband's brow. "We hae plenty o' meal in the house, and canna be mickle the waur o' what they'll tak for ae day an' nicht. Ye'se get something else to your breakfast directly." Then she went close to his side, and whispered into his ear the fearful conversation she had heard. Glenmannow, though he never knew what it was to fear, was of a disposition too quiet and mild not to be easily pacified, and the soldiers saw with regret his looks beginning to brighten under the influence of Mally's eloquence.

"Egad! there's a fine calf before the window," cried one of them, whom a new thought had opportunely struck; "Tom, go out and put a ball through it. We shall have a fine roast of veal, if this old lady knows how to manage it."

"Ye'll hae a fine roast deevil!" roared Glenmannow, now provoked beyond sufferance; "I'll gie ye"——

"Down, down with him!" cried the whole party at once, springing up, and endeavouring to surround him. But in this they resembled a posse of mastiffs attacking some lordly bull, which the enraged animal shakes from his sides and tramples in the dust. In one instant Glenmannow's plaid was flung from him upon the bed; his staff also, which was too long for use at such close quarters, was relinquished, and seizing by the collar and thigh the first of the fellows who attacked him, he used him against the others, both as a weapon and shield, with such fury and

effect, that they were all glad to provide for their safety by an instant retreat. Fortunately for them, the door chanced to be open, so that they reached the bent with comparatively little injury. But the poor fellow who was trussed in Glenmannow's grasp, and dashed against this and the other of them with such violence, had his body beaten almost to a mummy, and kept howling and calling for mercy in a most lamentable manner. By Glenmannow, however, he was totally unheard, until, on rushing to the door, his eye chanced to fall upon one of his own cars placed on end, and leaning against the side of the house. Tossing the soldier from him upon the grass, he immediately seized this rude vehicle, and, wrenching from it a limb, cast the huge weapon upon his shoulder, and bounded off in pursuit of his enemies.

By this time the soldiers had gained a hundred yards in advance, and were stretching away like greyhounds toward the summit of Glenquhargen. They were all nimble-footed, and the panic with which they were now actually seized gave wings to their speed, and rendered a matter of no regard the rocks and other impediments over which they were flying. Their pursuer was not more speedy, but much longer winded, and the rage which then impelled him was not less potent than their terror. He possessed a fund of physical ability which was almost inexhaustible, and he had sworn not to drop the pursuit till he had "smashed the hale set," so that from the length of the race the poor wights had but a small chance of safety. At length the top of Glenquhargen, then Cairnkinnow, and next Gowkthorn, were reached, without any loss or advantage to either party. From the latter of these places, the ground declines nearly the whole way to Drumlanrig, and the soldiers, with the start in their favour, flew on with a glimmering of hope that now they could scarcely be overtaken. Their hope was realised, but not without such overstraining as had nearly proved equally fatal with the vengeance from which they fled. Leaning forward almost to the ground, and staggering like drunkards from excess of fatigue, they at last reached the western staircase which leads into the court of the castle. Behind them Glenmannow rushed on also with abated speed, but with indignation as hot as ever. He still bore upon his shoulder the ponderous car limb; his face was literally bathed in perspiration; and the wild expression of his eyes, and the foam which was beginning to appear at each corner of his mouth, rendered him a true personification of Giant Madness broken from his chains.

The two dukes, who had been informed of their approach by some servants who observed them descending the opposite heights, were waiting to receive them within the balustrade which runs along that side of the castle; but on marking the fury of Glenmannow, Duke James deemed it prudent to retire with the exhausted soldiers until the storm should be passed; for while his tenant remained in that mood of mind, he dared not, absolute as was his authority, to come into his presence. His brother of Buccleuch was therefore left to bear the first brunt of the salutation, who, on Glenmannow's approach, called out, "What is the matter? What is to do?" Glenmannow, without regarding this interrogatory further than by darting upon him a wild and fierce look, sprang up stairs, and rushed past him into the court of the castle. But here his progress was stopped; for among the several doors which lead from thence to every part of the castle, he knew not by which his enemies had entered. One, however, was known to him, and along that passage he rapidly hastened, until he at length arrived in

the kitchen. There he was equally at fault, and there his pursuit was ended; for the smiles of the sonsy cook, and the fondlements of the various servants who thronged around him, succeeded in restoring his mind to a degree of calmness and repose. The cook eased his shoulder of the car limb, with the intention of repaying herself for the trouble by using it as fuel; others divested him of his bonnet; and all, with many words, prevailed upon him at last to assume a chair. After a moment's silence, in which he seemed to be lost in reflection, "Ay, ay," said he, "I see through a' this noo. It has been a trick o' the juke's makin' up." Then, with a serious air, he added, "But it was dangerous though; for if I had gotten a haud o' thae chaps, wha kens what I might hae done!"

The duke, on being informed of this change wrought upon his tenant, and having learnt from the soldiers the way in which he had been deprived of his breakfast, ordered him a plentiful refreshment, and afterwards sent for him into the presence of himself and of Buccleuch. The breach between them was speedily healed; and Glenmannow, nothing poorer for his race, returned shortly afterwards with a servant on horseback, who was dispatched to convey to headquarters the poor grenadier who had been so roughly handled in the affray.

Mally, with a humanity and forgiveness which the soldier had little right to expect, had succeeded in removing him from the spot where he was cast down, into the house, and having there laid him upon a bed, tended him with such kindness and care, that, by the time of Glenmannow's return, he was so far recovered as to be able to sit upon the horse sent to remove him. Glenmannow, after Mally had wrapped round him a pair of blankets, bore him out in his arms, and placed him behind the servant, who in this manner conducted him in safety to Drumlanrig.

This is the last exploit of a remarkable kind which I have been able to glean respecting Glenmannow. He lived to a pretty long age, yet his life was abridged within its natural period by imprudently taxing his great strength beyond its actual capability. A high dyke was in the course of being built, from the heights on the left of the Nith into the channel of the river, about four miles above Drumlanrig, on the way to Sanquhar, and in order to resist the force of the current, the largest stones that could be moved were built into the dyke at its termination. One in particular, which lay near the place, was deemed excellently fitted for that purpose, but its weight rendered it unmanageable. Glenmannow undertook to lift it into its place, and in reality did so; but in the effort he injured his breast and spine, and brought on a lingering disorder, of which he died in less than a twelvemonth afterwards, in the year 1705. I am not aware of his having left any descendants to perpetuate and spread his name; one thing at least is certain, that in the present day none such are to be found in that district which was the principal scene of his exploits, and where still is cherished to such a degree his singular yet honest renown.—*Traits of Scottish Life, and Pictures of Scenes and Character.*

MY GRANDMOTHER'S PORTRAIT.

By Daniel Gorrie.

In picture galleries, or in private apartments, portraits seldom receive much attention from visitors, unless they happen to have known the originals, or to be aware that the pictures are the productions of distinguished artists. And yet, whether we have known the originals or not, and apart altogether from the general artistic merit of the works, there are many portraits which have a wonderful effect in giving the mind a reflective and inquisitive turn. Portraits of this description may occasionally be seen in retired country houses of modest dimensions, where one need scarcely expect to find specimens of the highest class of art. Faces we may there observe, silently depending from the walls, on which strongly-pronounced character is depicted in spite of every artistic defect, and through the deep lines of which the record of a stirring or painful life seems to struggle earnestly for utterance. People are too much in the habit of regarding every person as commonplace and uninteresting who has not managed somehow to make a noise in the world; but in these "counterfeit presentments" of men and women who have died in comparative obscurity, known only to their own circle of friends, we may see much that strangely moves our hearts, and makes us long to learn what their history has been.

Let the reader look in fancy on that old portrait hanging before me there on the wall. To me it is no dead picture, but rather does it seem the living embodiment of a maternal grandmother —a heroic old dame, who never lost heart whatever might betide, and of whom that image is now almost the sole remaining relic. Even a stranger could scarcely fail to note with curious interest that small round face with nose and chin attenuated by years—those peering eyes, where a twinkle of youth yet breaks through the dim of eld—that wrinkled brow, shaded with a brown frontage-braid of borrowed hair —and that compact little head, encased in a snow-white cap with its broad band of black ribbon. The least skilful artist could hardly have failed in depicting the features; but the old familiar expression is also there, preserved as in amber, and the aged face is pleasantly blended in my mind with memories of early days. Detached incidents in her life, which she was fond of frequently relating to her grandchildren, who eagerly clustered around her, listening to the oft-told tale, recur to me with considerable freshness after the lapse of many years.

At the time when that portrait was taken, Mrs Moffat—as I shall name her —was well-nigh eighty years of age. For about the half of that period she had led a widowed life. Her husband, who witnessed many stirring scenes on sea and shore, had been a surgeon in the Royal Navy, and she was left "passing rich with forty pounds a year" of government pension.

There was one remarkable incident in his history to which she frequently recurred. Samuel Moffat obtained an appointment as surgeon on board the ill-fated *Royal George;* but before the time set apart for her leaving port, he found that the smell of the fresh paint of the new vessel created a feeling of nausea, which would have rendered him unfit for duty; and by his good fortune in getting transferred, on this account, to another man-of-war, he escaped the sad fate that befell so many hapless victims—

When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

A striking incident of this kind naturally made a deep impression on his own mind, and it also formed a prominent reminiscence in the memory of his faithful partner during the long remainder of her life.

The earlier period of Mrs Moffat's widowhood was passed in Edinburgh; but when death and marriage had scattered her family, she followed one of her married daughters to the country, and took up her abode in a neat poplar-shaded cottage on the outskirts of a quiet village, situated in a fertile and beautiful valley of the county that lies cradled in the twining arms of the Forth and the Tay. That cottage, with its garden behind, and pretty flower-borders in front, and with its row of poplar and rowan-trees, through which the summer breeze murmured so pleasantly, comes up vividly before my mind's eye at this moment. Beautiful as of yore the valley smiles around, with its girdling ridges belted with woods, and dotted with pleasant dwellings; and away to westward, shutting in the peaceful scene from the tumult of the great world, rise the twin Lomond hills, glorious at morn and eve, when bathed in the beams of the rising and setting sun. The good old lady, who had spent a large portion of her life in "Auld Reekie," when narrow Bristo Street and Potter-row and the adjoining courts were inhabited by the better class of citizens, took kindly to the country cottage, and she was fond of the garden and flowers. With a basket on her arm, she trotted about the garden, apparently very busy, but doing little after all. In autumn, after a gusty night, one of her first morning occupations was to gather up the fallen ruddy apples, which she preserved for the special gratification of her grandchildren. Many a time and oft were they debarred from touching the red berries of the rowan-trees, which look as tempting in children's eyes as did the forbidden fruit in those of Mother Eve. The girls were even enjoined not to make necklaces of these clustering red deceivers.

In that retired village there were, in those days, a good many well-to-do people, who had not found it very difficult to make money out of a generous soil. The different families lived on very sociable terms, and during the winter season there were rounds of tea-parties, winding up with cold suppers and hot toddy. Teetotalism was a thing unknown in that district and in those days, though I shall do the good folks the justice of saying that they knew the virtues of moderation. To all those winter gatherings of the local gentry, Mrs Moffat invariably received an invitation. They could not do without her, relishing as they did her ready wit and hearty good-humour. She was, in sooth, the life of every party. On such occasions she displayed all the artless buoyancy of youth, as if she had never endured the agonies of bereavement, or borne the burdens of life. She was then the very image of "Old Delight," and her aged face renewed its youth in the sunshine of joy. Some of the knowing lairds tried by bantering and otherwise to draw her out, and her quick cutting repartees were followed by explosions of mirth. It seemed marvellous that such a well of sunny mirth should be encased in that tiny frame. Indeed, it was nothing unusual for the hearty old lady to treat the company to a "canty" song at these village parties, and touches of melody still lingered about the cracks of her voice. When bothered overmuch to sing another song after she had already done enough, she generally met the request with a solitary stanza to this effect:—

There was a wee mannie an' a wee wifie,
And they lived in a vinegar bottle;

"And O," says the wee mannie to the wee wifie,
"Wow, but oor warld is little, is little!
Wow, but oor warld is little!"

Rare encounters of wit and amusing banter occasionally took place between her and a strange eccentric humorist of a lawyer of the old school, who frequently visited the village from a neighbouring country town. Old Bonthron was the name by which he was familiarly known.

It may readily be imagined that, when old Mr Bonthron and Mrs Moffat met in the same company, the fun would grow "fast and furious," and such certainly was the case. I have seen the hearty old humorist take the equally hearty old lady on his knee, and dandle her there like a child, greatly to their own delight and to the infinite amusement of the company. There will be less genial and boisterous mirth now-a-days, I should imagine, in that sequestered village.

Such was Mrs Moffat in her lightsome hours, when friends met friends; but her grandchildren were as much delighted with her when, in graver mood, she recalled early recollections, told them pleasant little stories, and narrated graphically what to her were eventful incidents in her life.

I can still remember some of the pleasant pictures she gave us of her early days. She was born in the town of Dalkeith, which is beautiful for situation, being planted in the midst of the richest woodland scenery, and she imprinted in our hearts vivid impressions of the delighted feelings with which, in the days of her girlhood, she looked through the gate of the Duke's great park, and saw the long winding avenue and the greensward traversed by nibbling sheep, and the magnificent trees whose "shadowing shroud" might cover a goodly company at their rural feast in the noontide of a summer's day. She described the rustic seats and summer-houses on the banks of a brook, that wandered at its own sweet will through the wooded grounds—regions and resorts of joyance, where the children of the town, through the kindness of the then reigning Duke of Buccleuch, were permitted to spend the livelong summer's day, thus enabling them to store their memories with pleasing recollections, which might come back upon them in their declining days, like visions of beauty from lands of old romance. There was a pathetic story about a family of larks that had their nest in the Duke's Park, which she recited to us over and over again, by way of inculcating the virtue of treating kindly all the creatures of God. Her story was, that some of the young rascals of Dalkeith had caught the mother-bird in the nest, and had carried off her and the whole family of young ones at one fell swoop. The male bird, thus deprived at once of mate and family, took up his melancholy station near the nest, and mourned his loss with plaintive pipe for two days, at the end of which time the broken-hearted warbler died. This affecting incident, told with much seriousness and feeling, was not unproductive of good effect upon the young listeners. Cities and towns being still to us mysteries of which we had only a vague conception, it pleased us much to hear her tell how the bells of Dalkeith tolled children to bed, and how little boys walked through the streets at night, calling "Hot pies for supper!" It struck us that at whatever hour the bell tolled, we should have liked to remain out of bed till the pies went round.

On winter evenings, beside the good old lady's cottage fire, she was often constrained to recount her famous voyage to London, in which she wellnigh suffered shipwreck. The war-vessel on board of which her husband acted as surgeon had arrived in the Thames. He could not then obtain leave of absence, and as they had not met for many long months, she determined—protracted as the passage then

was from Leith to London—to make an effort to see her husband, and to visit the great metropolis. Steamers had not, at that period, come into existence, and the clipper-smacks that traded between Leith and London, and took a few venturesome passengers on their trips, dodged along the Scotch and English coasts for days and weeks, thus making a lengthened voyage of what is now a brief and pleasant sail. It was considered a bold and hazardous undertaking, in those days, for any lady to proceed alone on such a voyage. This, however, she did, as she was gifted with a wonderful amount of pluck, leaving her family in the charge of some friends till she returned.

The vessel had scarcely left the Firth of Forth, and got out into the open sea, when the weather underwent a bad turn, and soon they had to encounter all the fury of a severe storm, which caused many shipwrecks along the whole eastern seaboard. With a kind of placid contentment—nay, even with occasional glee—would she describe the protracted miseries and hardships they endured, having run short of supplies, and every hour expecting the vessel to founder. It was three weeks after leaving Leith until the smack was, as she described it, towed up the Thames like a dead dog, without either mast or bowsprit—a hapless and helpless hulk. However, she managed to see her husband, and the happiness of the meeting would be considered a good equivalent for the mishaps of the voyage. She saw, in the great metropolis, the then Prince of Wales—the "First Gentleman in Europe," and used to relate, with considerable gusto (old ladies being more rough-and-ready then than now), how the Prince, as he was riding in St James's Park, overheard a hussar in the crowd exclaiming, "He's a d——d handsome fellow!" and immediately lifting his hat, his Royal Highness replied, "Thank you, my lad; but you put too much spice in your compliments!" That London expedition was a red-letter leaf in Mrs Moffat's biography, and it was well thumbed by us juveniles. Her return voyage was comparatively comfortable, and much more rapid; but she never saw her husband again, as he died at sea, and was consigned to the deep.

Even more interesting than the London trip were all the stories and incidents connected with her only son—our uncle who *ought* to have been, but who was dead before any of us were born. Through the kindness and influence of Admiral Greig of the Russian navy, he obtained a commission in the Russian service at an unusually early age—Russia and Britain being at that time in close alliance. Neither the Russian navy nor army was in the best condition, and the Emperor was very desirous to obtain the services of British officers, Scotsmen being preferred. Mrs Moffat loved her son with all the warmth of her kindly nature, and when he had been about a year or two in the Russian service, the news spread through Edinburgh one day, that a Russian man-of-war was coming up the Firth to Leith roads. I have heard the good lady relate the eventful incidents of that day with glistening eyes and tremulous voice.

The tidings were conveyed to her by friends who knew that she had some reason to be interested in the news. She had received no communication from her son for some time, as the mails were then very irregular, and letters often went amissing; and, filled with the hope that he might be on board the Russian vessel that was approaching the roads, she immediately hurried off for Leith, whither crowds of people were already repairing, as a Russian war-vessel in the Forth was as great a rarity then as it is now. Before she arrived at the pier, the vessel had anchored in the roads, and the pier,

neither so long nor so commodious as it is now, was thronged with people pressing onwards to get a sight of the stranger ship. Nothing daunted by the crowd, Mrs Moffat squeezed herself forward, at the imminent risk of being seriously crushed. A gentleman who occupied a "coigne of vantage," out of the stream of the crowd, observed this slight-looking lady pressing forward with great eagerness. He immediately hailed her, and asked, as she appeared very much interested, if she expected any one, or had any friends on board. She replied that she half expected her son to be with the vessel. The gentleman, who was to her a total stranger, but who must have been a gentleman every inch, immediately took her under his protection, and having a telescope in his hand, he made observations, and reported progress.

One of the ship's boats had been let down, and he told her that he observed officers in white uniform rapidly descending. Mrs Moffat's eagerness and anxiety were now on the increase. The boat put off from the ship, propelled by sturdy and regular strokes, cutting the water into foam, which sparkled in the sunshine. When the boat had approached midway between the ship and the shore, Mrs Moffat asked her protector if he could distinguish one officer apparently younger than the others.

"Yes," he replied; "there is one who seems scarcely to have passed from boyhood to manhood."

Her eager impatience, with hope and fear alternating in her heart, seemed now to agitate her whole frame, and the bystanders, seeing her anxiety, appeared also to share in her interest.

At last the boat, well filled with officers, shot alongside the pier, the crowd rushing and cheering, as it sped onward to the upper landing-place. It was with great difficulty that the gentleman could restrain the anxious mother from dashing into the rushing stream of people. When the crowd had thinned off a little, they made their way up the pier, and found that the officers had all left the boat and gone into the Old Ship Inn—probably because they had no desire of being mobbed. Mrs Moffat immediately went to the inn, and requested an attendant to ask if one of the officers belonged to Scotland, and if so, to be good enough to mention his name.

"Yes—Moffat!" was the cheery response, and in a short time mother and son were locked in each other's arms in the doorway of the Old Ship.

With a glee, not unmingled with tender regrets, she used to tell how, when she and the spruce young officer were proceeding up Leith Walk together to Edinburgh, an old woman stopped them, and, clapping him kindly on the shoulder, said—"Ay, my mannie, ye'll be a captain yet!" This prophecy of the old woman certainly met its fulfilment.

After staying a few days in the old home near the Meadows, young Moffat again took his departure, never more to see his affectionate mother, or the bald crown of Arthur Seat rising by the side of the familiar Firth. He joined the army (changes of officers from the navy to the army being then frequent in the Russian service), and enacted his part honourably in many memorable scenes. Still do I remember the tender and tearful care with which his old mother opened up the yellow letters, with their faded inktracings, which contained descriptions of the part he played in harassing the French, during their disastrous retreat after the burning of Moscow. One of these letters, I recollect, commenced thus—"Here we are, driving the French before us like a flock of sheep;" and in others he gave painful descriptions of their coming up to small parties of French soldiers who were literally glued

by the extreme frost to the ground—quite stiff and dead, but still in a standing attitude, and leaning on their muskets. Poor wretches! that was their sole reward for helping to whet the appetite of an insatiable ambition. In those warlike times, young Moffat grew into favour, and gained promotion. He received a gold-hilted sword from the Emperor for distinguished service, but he succumbed to fatigue, and died on foreign soil. The gold-headed sword and his epaulets, which he had bequeathed to a favourite sister, fell into the hands of harpies in London, and to this day have never reached Scotland.

In the quiet village Mrs Moffat spent her declining days in peace and sweet content, and she now sleeps in the village churchyard, till the last spring that visits the world shall waken inanimate dust to immortal life.

THE BAPTISM.

By Professor Wilson.

It is a pleasant and impressive time, when, at the close of divine service, in some small country church, there takes place the gentle stir and preparation for a baptism. A sudden air of cheerfulness spreads over the whole congregation; the more solemn expression of all countenances fades away; and it is at once felt that a rite is about to be performed which, although of a sacred and awful kind, is yet connected with a thousand delightful associations of purity, beauty, and innocence. Then there is an eager bending of smiling faces over the humble galleries—an unconscious rising up in affectionate curiosity—and a slight murmuring sound, in which is no violation of the Sabbath sanctity of God's house, when, in the middle passage of the church, the party of women is seen, matrons and maids, who bear in their bosoms, or in their arms, the helpless beings about to be made members of the Christian communion.

There sit, all dressed becomingly in white, the fond and happy baptismal group. The babies have been intrusted, for a precious hour, to the bosoms of young maidens, who tenderly fold them to their yearning hearts, and with endearments taught by nature, are stilling, not always successfully, their plaintive cries. Then the proud and delighted girls rise up, one after the other, in sight of the whole congregation, and hold up the infants, arrayed in neat caps and long flowing linen, into their fathers' hands. For the poorest of the poor, if he has a heart at all, will have his infant well dressed on such a day, even although it should scant his meal for weeks to come, and force him to spare fuel to his winter fire.

And now the fathers were all standing below the pulpit, with grave and thoughtful faces. Each has tenderly taken his infant into his toil-hardened hands, and supports it in gentle and steadfast affection. They are all the children of poverty, and if they live, are destined to a life of toil. But now poverty puts on its most pleasant aspect, for it is beheld standing before the altar of religion with contentment and faith. This is a time when the better and deeper nature of every man must rise up within him, and when he must feel, more especially, that he is a spiritual and immortal being making covenant with

God. He is about to take upon himself a holy charge; to promise to look after his child's immortal soul; and to keep its little feet from the paths of evil, and in those of innocence and peace. Such a thought elevates the lowest mind above itself, diffuses additional tenderness over the domestic relations, and makes them who hold up their infants to the baptismal font, better fathers, husbands, and sons, by the deeper insight which they then possess into their nature and their life.

The minister consecrates the water; and, as it falls on his infant's face, the father feels the great oath in his soul. As the poor helpless creature is wailing in his arms, he thinks how needful indeed to human infancy is the love of Providence! And when, after delivering each his child into the arms of the smiling maiden from whom he had received it, he again takes his place for admonition and advice before the pulpit, his mind is well disposed to think on the perfect beauty of that religion of which the Divine Founder said, "Suffer little children to be brought unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!"

The rite of baptism had not thus been performed for several months in the kirk of Lanark. It was now the hottest time of persecution; and the inhabitants of that parish found other places in which to worship God and celebrate the ordinances of religion. It was now the Sabbath-day, and a small congregation of about a hundred souls had met for divine service in a place of worship more magnificent than any temple that human hands had ever built to Deity. Here, too, were three children about to be baptised. The congregation had not assembled to the toll of the bell, but each heart knew the hour and observed it; for there are a hundred sun-dials among the hills, woods, moors, and fields, and the shepherd and the peasant see the hours passing by them in sunshine and shadow.

The church in which they were assembled was hewn by God's hand out of the eternal rocks. A river rolled its way through a mighty chasm of cliffs, several hundred feet high, of which the one side presented enormous masses, and the other corresponding recesses, as if the great stone girdle had been rent by a convulsion. The channel was overspread with prodigious fragments of rock or large loose stones, some of them smooth and bare, others containing soil and verdure in their rents and fissures, and here and there crowned with shrubs and trees. The eye could at once command a long stretching vista, seemingly closed and shut up at both extremities by the coalescing cliffs. This majestic reach of river contained pools, streams, rushing shelves, and waterfalls innumerable; and when the water was low, which it now was in the common drought, it was easy to walk up this scene, with the calm blue sky overhead, an utter and sublime solitude. On looking up, the soul was bowed down by the feeling of that prodigious height of unscaleable and often overhanging cliff. Between the channel and the summit of the far-extended precipices were perpetually flying rooks and wood-pigeons, and now and then a hawk, filling the profound abyss with their wild cawing, deep murmur, or shrilly shriek. Sometimes a heron would stand erect ard still on some little stone island, or rise up like a white cloud along the black wall of the chasm and disappear. Winged creatures alone could inhabit this region. The fox and wild-cat chose more accessible haunts. Yet there came the persecuted Christians and worshipped God, whose hand hung over their heads those magnificent pillars and arches, scooped out those galleries from the solid rock, and laid at their feet the calm water in its transparent beauty, in which they could see themselves sitting in reflected groups, with their Bibles in their hands.

Here, upon a semicircular ledge of rocks, over a narrow chasm, of which the tiny stream played in a murmuring waterfall, and divided the congregation into two equal parts, sat about a hundred persons, all devoutly listening to their minister, who stood before them on what might well be called a small natural pulpit of living stone. Up to it there led a short flight of steps, and over it waved the canopy of a tall graceful birch-tree. This pulpit stood in the middle of the channel, directly facing that congregation, and separated from them by the clear deep sparkling pool into which the scarce-heard water poured over the blackened rock. The water, as it left the pool, separated into two streams, and flowed on each side of that altar, thus placing it on an island, whose large mossy stones were richly embowered under the golden blossoms and green tresses of the broom. Divine service was closed, and a row of maidens, all clothed in purest white, came gliding off from the congregation, and crossing the stream on some stepping-stones, arranged themselves at the foot of the pulpit, with the infants about to be baptized. The fathers of the infants, just as if they had been in their own kirk, had been sitting there during worship, and now stood up before the minister. The baptismal water, taken from the pellucid pool, was lying consecrated in a small hollow of one of the upright stones that formed one side or pillar of the pulpit, and the holy rite proceeded. Some of the younger ones in that semicircle kept gazing down into the pool, in which the whole scene was reflected, and now and then, in spite of the grave looks or admonishing whispers of their elders, letting a pebble fall into the water, that they might judge of its depth from the length of time that elapsed before the clear air-bells lay sparkling on the agitated surface. The rite was over, and the religious services of the day closed by a psalm. The mighty rocks hemmed in the holy sound, and sent it in a more compacted volume, clear, sweet, and strong, up to heaven. When the psalm ceased, an echo, like a spirit's voice, was heard dying away up among the magnificent architecture of the cliffs, and once more might be noticed in the silence the reviving voice of the waterfall.

Just then a large stone fell from the top of the cliff into the pool, a loud voice was heard, and a plaid hung over on the point of a shepherd's staff. Their watchful sentinel had descried danger, and this was his warning. Forthwith the congregation rose. There were paths dangerous to unpractised feet, along the ledges of the rocks, leading up to several caves and places of concealment. The more active and young assisted the elder—more especially the old pastor, and the women with the infants; and many minutes had not elapsed, till not a living creature was visible in the channel of the stream, but all of them hidden, or nearly so, in the clefts and caverns.

The shepherd who had given the alarm had lain down again in his plaid instantly on the greensward upon the summit of these precipices. A party of soldiers were immediately upon him, and demanded what signals he had been making, and to whom; when one of them, looking over the edge of the cliff, exclaimed, "See, see, Humphrey! we have caught the whole tabernacle of the Lord in a net at last. There they are, praising God among the stones of the river Mouss. These are the Cartland Craigs. By my soul's salvation, a noble cathedral!" "Fling the lying sentinel over the cliffs. Here is a canting Covenanter for you, deceiving honest soldiers on the very Sabbath-day. Over with him, over with him—out of the gallery into the pit." But the shepherd had vanished like a shadow; and, mixing with the tall green broom

and brushes, was making his unseen way towards the wood. "Satan has saved his servant. But come, my lads, follow me; I know the way down into the bed of the stream, and the steps up to Wallace's Cave. They are called the 'Kittle Nine Stanes.' The hunt's up—we'll be all in at the death. Halloo, my boys, halloo!"

The soldiers dashed down a less precipitous part of the wooded banks, a little below the "Craigs," and hurried up the channel. But when they reached the altar where the old gray-haired minister had been seen standing, and the rocks that had been covered with people, all was silent and solitary —not a creature to be seen.

"Here is a Bible dropped by some of them," cried a soldier; and with his foot spun it away into the pool.

"A bonnet! a bonnet!" cried another. "Now for the pretty sanctified face that rolled its demure eyes below it."

But after a few jests and oaths the soldiers stood still, eyeing with a kind of mysterious dread the black and silent walls of the rock that hemmed them in, and hearing only the small voice of the stream that sent a profounder stillness through the heart of that majestic solitude. "Curse these cowardly Covenanters! What if they tumble down upon our heads pieces of rock from their hiding-places? Advance? Or retreat?"

There was no reply; for a slight fear was upon every man. Musket or bayonet could be of little use to men obliged to clamber up rocks, along slender paths, leading they knew not where; and they were aware that armed men now-a-days worshipped God,—men of iron hearts, who feared not the glitter of the soldier's arms, neither barrel nor bayonet; men of long stride, firm step, and broad breast, who, on the open field, would have overthrown the marshalled line, and gone first and foremost if a city had to be taken by storm.

As the soldiers were standing together irresolute, a noise came upon their ears like distant thunder, but even more appalling; and a slight current of air, as if propelled by it, passed whispering along the sweetbriers and the broom, and the tresses of the birch-trees. It came deepening and rolling, and roaring on, and the very Cartland Craigs shook to their foundation as if in an earthquake. "The Lord have mercy upon us!—what is this?" And down fell many of the miserable wretches on their knees, and some on their faces, upon the sharp-pointed rocks. Now it was like the sound of many myriad chariots rolling on their iron axles down the stony channel of the torrent. The old grayhaired minister issued from the mouth of Wallace's Cave, and said, with a loud voice, "The Lord God terrible reigneth!" A waterspout had burst up among the moorlands, and the river, in its power, was at hand. There it came —tumbling along into that long reach of cliffs, and in a moment filled it with one mass of waves. Huge agitated clouds of foam rode on the surface of a blood-red torrent. An army must have been swept off by that flood. The soldiers perished in a moment; but high up in the cliffs, above the sweep of destruction, were the Covenanters— men, women, and children, uttering prayers to God, unheard by themselves in that raging thunder.

THE LAIRD'S WOOING.

By John Galt.

The laird began the record of his eighteenth year in these words:—

There lived at this time, on the farmstead of Broomlands, a person that was a woman, by calling a widow; and she and her husband, when he was in this life, had atween them Annie Daisie, a dochter;—very fair she was to look upon, comely withal, and of a feleccity o' nature.

This pretty Annie Daisie, I know not hoo, found favour in my eyes, and I made no scruple of going to the kirk every Sabbath day to see her, though Mr Glebeantiends was, to a certainty, a vera maksleepie preacher. When I forgathered with her by accident, I was all in a confusion; and when I would hae spoken to her wi' kindly words, I could but look in her clear een and nicher like Willie Gouk, the haverel laddie; the which made her jeer me as if I had a want, and been daft likewise; so that seeing I cam no speed in courting for myself, I thocht o' telling my mother; but that was a kittle job,—howsoever, I took heart, and said—

"Mother!"

"Well, son," she made answer, "what would ye?"

"I'm going to be marriet," quo' I.

"Marriet!" cried she, spreading out her arms wi' consternation. "And wha's the bride?"

I didna like just to gie her an even down answer, but said I thought myself old enough for a helpmeet to my table, which caused her to respond with a laugh; whereupon I told her I was thinking of Annie Daisie.

"Ye'll surely ne'er marry the like o' her;—she's only a gair'ner's dochter."

But I thocht of Adam and Eve, and said—"We're a' come of a gair'ner;"—the which caused her presently to wax vera wroth with me; and she stampit with her foot, and called me a blot on the 'scutcheon o' Auldbiggins; then she sat down, and began to reflec' with herself; and, after a season, she spoke rawtional about the connection, saying she had a wife in her mind for me, far more to the purpose than such a causey-dancer as Annie Daisie.

But I couldna bide to hear Annie Daisie mislikened, and yet I was feart to commit the sin of disobedience, for my mother had no mercy when she thought I rebelled against her authority; so I sat down, and was in a tribulation, and then I speir't, with a flutter of affliction, who it was that she had willed to be my wife.

"Miss Betty Græme," said she; "if she can be persuaded to tak sic a headowit."

Now this Miss Betty Græme was the tocherless sixth daughter o' a broken Glasgow provost, and made her leevin' by seamstress-work and flowering lawn; but she was come of gentle blood, and was herself a gentle creature, though no sae blithe as bonnie Annie Daisie; and for that I told my mother I would never take her, though it should be the death o' me. Accordingly I ran out of the house, and took to the hills, and wistna where I was, till I found myself at the door of the Broomlands, with Annie Daisie before me, singing like a laverock as she watered the yarn of her ain spinning on the green. On seeing me, however, she stoppit, and cried—

"Gude keep us a', laird!—what's frightened you to flee hither?"

But I was desperate, and I ran till her, and fell on my knees in a lover-like fashion; but wha would hae thocht it?

—she dang me ower on my back, and as I lay on the ground she watered me with her watering-can, and was like to dee wi' laughing: the which sign and manifestation of hatred on her part quenched the low o' love on mine; an' I raise an' went hame, drookit and dripping as I was, and told my mother I would be an obedient and dutiful son.

Soon after this, Annie Daisie was marriet to John Lounlans; and there was a fulsome phrasing about them when they were kirkit, as the comeliest couple in the parish. It was castor-oil to hear't; and I was determined to be upsides with them, for the way she had jilted me.

In the meanwhile my mother, that never, when she had a turn in hand, alloo't the grass to grow in her path, invited Miss Betty Græme to stay a week with us; the which, as her father's family were in a straitened circumstance, she was glad to accept; and being come, and her mother with her, I could discern a confabbing atween the twa auld leddies—Mrs Græme shaking the head of scrupulosity, and my mother laying down the law and the gospel;—all denoting a matter-o'-money plot for me and Miss Betty.

At last it came to pass, on the morning of the third day, that Miss Betty did not rise to take her breakfast with us, but was indisposed; and when she came to her dinner, her een were bleared and begrutten. After dinner, however, my mother that day put down, what wasna common with her housewifery, a bottle o' port in a decanter, instead o' the gardevin for toddy, and made Miss Betty drink a glass to mak her better, and me to drink three, saying, "Faint heart never won fair leddy." Upon the whilk hint I took another myself, and drank a toast for better acquaintance with Miss Betty. Then the twa matrons raise to leave the room, and Miss Betty was rising too; but her mother laid her hand upon her shouther, and said—

"It's our lot, my dear, and we maun bear with it."

Thus it came to pass that I and Miss Betty were left by ourselves in a very comical situation.

There was silence for a space of time between us; at last she drew a deep sigh, and I responded, to the best o my ability, with another. Then she took out her pocket-napkin, and began to wipe her eyes. This is something like serious courting, thocht I to myself, for sighs and tears are the food of love; but I wasna yet just ready to greet; hoosever, I likewise took up my pocket-napkin, and made a sign of sympathy by blowing my nose, and then I said—

"Miss Betty Græme, how would ye like to be Leddy of Auldbiggins, under my mother?"

"Oh, heavens!" cried she, in a voice that gart me a' dinnle; and she burst into a passion of tears—the whilk to see so affectit me that I couldna help greeting too; the sight whereof made her rise and walk the room like a dementit bedlamite.

I was terrified, for her agitation wasna like the raptures I expectit; but I rose from my seat, and going round to the other side of the table where she was pacing the floor, I followed her, and pulling her by the skirt, said, in a gallant way, to raise her spirits—

"Miss Betty Græme, will ye sit doon on my knee?"

I'll ne'er forget the look she gied for answer; but it raised my courage, and I said, "E'en's ye like, Meg Dorts"—and with a flourish o' my heel, I left her to tune her pipes alane. This did the business, as I thocht; for though I saw her no more that night, yet the next morning she came to breakfast a subdued woman, and my mother, before the week was out, began to make preparations for the wedding.

But, lo and behold! one afternoon,

as Miss Betty and me were taking a walk, at her own request, on the high road, by came a whisky with a young man in it, that had been a penny-clerk to her father, and before you could say, hey cockolorum! she was up in the gig, and doon at his side, and aff and away like the dust in a whirlwind.

I was very angry to be sae jiltit a second time, but it wasna with an anger like the anger I suffered for what I met with at the hands of Annie Daisie. It was a real passion. I ran hame like a clap o' thunder, and raged and rampaged till Mrs Græme was out of the house, bag and baggage. My mother thought I was gane wud, and stood and lookit at me, and didna daur to say nay to my commands. Whereas, the thocht o' the usage I had gotten frae Annie Daisie bred a heart-sickness of humiliation, and I surely think that if she had not carried her scorn o' me sae far as to prefer a bare farmer lad like John Lounlans, I had hae sank into a decline, and sought the grave with a broken heart. But her marrying him roused my corruption, and was as souring to the milk of my nature. I could hae forgiven her the watering; and had she gotten a gentleman of family, I would not have been overly miscontented; but to think, after the offer she had from a man of my degree, that she should take up with a tiller of the ground, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, was gall and wormwood. Truly, it was nothing less than a kithing of the evil spirit of the democraws that sae withered the green bay-trees of the world, when I was made a captain in the volunteers, by order of the Lord Lieutenant, 'cause, as his lordship said, of my stake in the country.—"*The Last of the Lairds.*"

THOMAS THE RHYMER:

AN ANCIENT FAIRY LEGEND.

By Sir Walter Scott.

Thomas of Erceldoune, in Lauderdale, called the Rhymer on account of his producing a poetical romance on the subject of Tristrem and Yseult, which is curious as the earliest specimen of English verse known to exist, flourished in the reign of Alexander III. of Scotland. Like other men of talent of the period, Thomas was suspected of magic. He was also said to have the gift of prophecy, which was accounted for in the following peculiar manner, referring entirely to the Elfin superstition. As Thomas lay on Huntly Bank (a place on the descent of the Eildon hills, which raise their triple crest above the celebrated monastery of Melrose), he saw a lady so extremely beautiful that he imagined it must be the Virgin Mary herself. Her appointments, however, were those rather of an amazon, or goddess of the woods. Her steed was of the highest beauty, and at his mane hung thirty silver bells and nine, which were music to the wind as she paced along. Her saddle was of "royal bone" (ivory), laid over with "orfeverie" (goldsmith's work). Her stirrups—her dress—all corresponded with her extreme beauty, and the magnificence of her array. The fair huntress had her bow in hand, and her arrows at her belt. She led three greyhounds in a leash, and three raches, or hounds of scent, followed her closely.

She rejected and disclaimed the

homage which Thomas desired to pay to her; so that, passing from one extremity to the other, Thomas became as bold as he had at first been humble. The lady warns him that he must become her slave, if he should prosecute his suit towards her in the manner he proposes. Before their interview terminates, the appearance of the beautiful lady is changed into that of the most hideous hag in existence. A witch from the spital or almshouse would have been a goddess in comparison to the late beautiful huntress. Hideous as she was, Thomas's irregular desires had placed him under the control of this hag, and when she bade him take leave of the sun, and of the leaf that grew on the tree, he felt himself under the necessity of obeying her. A cavern received them, in which, following his frightful guide, he for three days travelled in darkness, sometimes hearing the booming of a distant ocean, sometimes walking through rivers of blood, which crossed their subterranean path. At length they emerged into daylight, in a most beautiful orchard. Thomas, almost fainting for want of food, stretches out his hand towards the goodly fruit which hangs around him, but is forbidden by his conductress, who informs him that these are the fatal apples which were the cause of the fall of man. He perceives also that his guide had no sooner entered this mysterious ground, and breathed its magic air, than she was revived in beauty, equipage, and splendour, as fair or fairer than he had first seen her on the mountain. She then proceeds to explain to him the character of the country.

"Yonder right hand path," she says, "conveys the spirits of the blest to paradise. Yon downward and well-worn way leads sinful souls to the place of everlasting punishment. The third road, by yonder dark brake, conducts to the milder place of pain, from which prayer and mass may release offenders. But see you yet a fourth road, sweeping along the plain to yonder splendid castle? Yonder is the road to Elfland, to which we are now bound. The lord of the castle is king of the country, and I am his queen. And when we enter yonder castle, you must observe strict silence, and answer no question that is asked at you, and I will account for your silence by saying I took your speech when I brought you from middle earth."

Having thus instructed her lover, they journeyed on to the castle, and entering by the kitchen, found themselves in the midst of such a festive scene as might become the mansion of a great feudal lord or prince.

Thirty carcases of deer were lying on the massive kitchen board, under the hands of numerous cooks, who toiled to cut them up and dress them, while the gigantic greyhounds which had taken the spoil lay lapping the blood, and enjoying the sight of the slain game. They came next to the royal hall, where the king received his loving consort without censure or suspicion. Knights and ladies, dancing by threes, occupied the floor of the hall, and Thomas, the fatigues of his journey from the Eildon hills forgotten, went forward and joined in the revelry. After a period, however, which seemed to him a very short one, the queen spoke with him apart, and bade him prepare to return to his own country.

"Now," said the queen, "how long think you that you have been here?"

"Certes, fair lady," answered Thomas, "not above these seven days."

"You are deceived," answered the queen; "you have been seven years in this castle; and it is full time you were gone. Know, Thomas, that the archfiend will come to this castle to-morrow to demand his tribute, and so handsome a man as you will attract his eye. For all the world would I not suffer you to

be betrayed to such a fate; therefore up, and let us be going."

This terrible news reconciled Thomas to his departure from Elfin land, and the queen was not long in placing him upon Huntly Bank, where the birds were singing. She took a tender leave of him, and to ensure his reputation bestowed on him the tongue which *could not lie.* Thomas in vain objected to this inconvenient and involuntary adhesion to veracity, which would make him, as he thought, unfit for church or for market, for king's court or for lady's bower. But all his remonstrances were disregarded by the lady, and Thomas the Rhymer, whenever the discourse turned on the future, gained the credit of a prophet whether he would or not; for he could say nothing but what was sure to come to pass.

Thomas remained several years in his own tower near Erceldoune, and enjoyed the fame of his predictions, several of which are current among the country people to this day. At length, as the prophet was entertaining the Earl of March in his dwelling, a cry of astonishment arose in the village, on the appearance of a hart and hind, which left the forest, and, contrary to their shy nature, came quietly onward, traversing the village towards the dwelling of Thomas. The prophet instantly rose from the board; and acknowledging the prodigy as the summons of his fate, he accompanied the hart and hind into the forest, and though occasionally seen by individuals to whom he has chosen to show himself, he has never again mixed familiarly with mankind.

Thomas of Erceldoune, during his retirement, has been supposed, from time to time, to be levying forces to take the field in some crisis of his country's fate. The story has often been told, of a daring horse-jockey having sold a black horse to a man of venerable and antique appearance, who appointed the remarkable hillock upon Eildon hills, called the Lucken-hare, as the place where, at twelve o'clock at night, he should receive the price. He came, and his money was paid in ancient coin, and he was invited by his customer to view his residence. The trader in horses followed his guide in the deepest astonishment through several ranges of stalls, in each of which a horse stood motionless, while an armed warrior lay equally still at the charger's feet.

"All these men," said the wizard in a whisper, "will awaken at the battle of Sheriffmuir."

At the extremity of this extraordinary depôt hung a sword and a horn, which the prophet pointed out to the horse-dealer as containing the means of dissolving the spell. The man in confusion took the horn, and attempted to wind it. The horses instantly started in their stalls, stamped, and shook their bridles; the men arose and clashed their armour, and the mortal, terrified at the tumult he had excited, dropped the horn from his hand. A voice like that of a giant, louder even than the tumult around, pronounced these words:—

Woe to the coward that ever he was born,
That did not draw the sword before he blew the horn!

A whirlwind expelled the horse-dealer from the cavern, the entrance to which he could never again find. A moral might, perhaps, be extracted from the legend,—namely, that it is best to be armed against danger before bidding it defiance. But it is a circumstance worth notice, that although this edition of the tale is limited to the year 1715, by the very mention of Sheriffmuir, yet a similar story appears to have been current during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, which is given by Reginald Scot. The narrative is edifying as peculiarly illustrative of the mode of marring a curious tale in telling it, which was one of the

virtues professed by Caius when he hired himself to King Lear. Reginald Scot, incredulous on the subject of witchcraft, seems to have given some weight to the belief of those who thought that the spirits of famous men do, after death, take up some particular habitations near cities, towns, and countries, and act as tutelary and guardian spirits to the places they loved while in the flesh.

"But more particularly to illustrate this conjecture," says he, "I could name a person who hath lately appeared thrice since his decease, at least some ghostly being or other that calls itself by the name of such a person, who was dead a hundred years ago, and was in his lifetime accounted as a prophet or predicter, by the assistance of sublunary spirits; and now, at his appearance, did also give strange predictions respecting famine and plenty, war and bloodshed, and the end of the world. By the information of the person that had communication with him, the last of his appearances was in the following manner:—'I had been,' said he, 'to sell a horse at the next market town, but not attaining my price, as I returned home, by the way I met this man, who began to be familiar with me, asking what news, and how affairs moved through the country. I answered as I thought fit; withal I told him of my horse, whom he began to cheapen, and proceeded with me so far that the price was agreed upon. So he turned back with me, and told me that if I would go along with him, I should receive my money. On our way we went,—I upon my horse, and he on another milk-white beast. After much travel, I asked him where he dwelt, and what his name was. He told me that his dwelling was a mile off, at a place called *Farran*, of which place I had never heard,* though I knew all the country round about. He also told me that he himself was the person of the family of Learmonths,† so much spoken of as a prophet. At which I began to be somewhat fearful, perceiving we were on a road which I had never been on before, which increased my fear and amazement more. 'Well! on we went till he brought me under ground, I knew not how, into the presence of a beautiful woman, who paid me the money without speaking a word. He conducted me out again through a large and long entry, where I saw above six hundred men in armour laid prostrate on the ground as if asleep. At last I found myself in the open field, by the help of the moonlight, in the very place where I first met him, and made a shift to get home by three in the morning. But the money I received was just double of what I esteemed it when the woman paid me, of which, at this instant, I have several pieces to show, consisting of ninepennies, thirteenpence-halfpennies, &c.'"

It is a great pity that this horse-dealer, having specimens of the fairy coin, of a quality more permanent than usual, had not favoured us with an account of an impress so valuable to medallists. It is not the less edifying, as we are deprived of the more picturesque parts of the story, to learn that Thomas's payment was as faithful as his prophecies. The beautiful lady who bore the purse must have been undoubtedly the Fairy Queen, whose affection, though, like that of his own Yseult, we cannot term it altogether laudable, seems yet to have borne a faithful and firm character.

* In this Sir Walter confesses himself "in the same ignorance as his namesake Reginald, though having at least as many opportunities of information."

† In popular tradition, the name of Thomas the Rhymer was always averred to be Learmonth, though he neither uses it himself, nor is described by his son other than Le Rymour. The Learmonths of Dairsie, in Fife, claimed descent from the prophet.

LACHLAN MORE:

A TRADITIONARY TALE OF THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS.

LACHLAN MORE MACLEAN, of Duart, was one of the most remarkable men connected with the Highlands of Scotland in his days. His father having died early, King James the Fifth took a considerable interest in this young man, and he was educated at his expense. Lachlan's grandfather had been at the fatal battle of Flodden, with a large body of his clan, and he was killed in the immediate defence of his unfortunate prince.

The son and successor of James the Fourth was not unmindful of this, and he was desirous of forming a matrimonial connection between the young chief and the heiress of Athole. Preliminaries having been settled among the parties, the bridegroom was suddenly called to his own country, and on his way he visited the Earl of Glencairn, at his castle on the banks of the Clyde. Cards were introduced in the evening, and Maclean's partner was one of the earl's daughters. In the course of the evening the game happened to be changed, and the company again cut for partners; on which another of the daughters whispered in her sister's ear, that if the Highland chief had been her partner, she would not have hazarded the loss of him by cutting anew. The chief heard the remark, and was so pleased with the compliment, and so fascinated with the charm of Lady Margaret Cunningham, that a match was made up between them, and they were speedily married. Maclean thus gave great offence to the king, and lost the richest heiress at that time in Scotland.

Lachlan More's sister was married to Angus Macdonald, of Islay and Kintyre, then the most powerful of the branches which sprung from the Lord of the Isles. These two chiefs appear to have been much of the same disposition,—both were violent, ambitious, and turbulent. Their bloody feuds were productive of much misery to their people, and ended injuriously to all parties. Macdonald, on his return from the Isle of Skye, was forced to take shelter in that portion of the island of Jura which was the property of Maclean; and it unfortunately happened that two villains of the clan Macdonald, whose bad conduct had induced them to take refuge in Mull, to escape punishment from their own chief, happened to be then in Jura. It would seem that they delighted in mischief, and they adopted an expedient which effectually answered their purpose.

Maclean had some cattle close to the place where the Macdonalds lay; the two renegades slaughtered some of these, and carried away many more of them. They left Jura before daylight, and contrived to convey information to Lachlan More that Macdonald had done him all this damage. Duart collected a considerable number of his men, and arrived in Jura before the Macdonalds departed. Without making proper inquiry into the circumstances, he rashly attacked the other party, and many of them were slain, but their chief escaped. It appears to be admitted on all hands that this was the beginning of the sanguinary warfare which followed, and Maclean was certainly culpable. Mutual friends interfered, and endeavoured to effect a reconciliation between persons so nearly connected. The Earl of Argyle was maternal uncle to Lachlan, and chiefly

by his powerful intercession the further effusion of blood was prevented for a time.

Macdonald had occasion to be again in Skye, and on his return he was invited by Maclean to visit him in the castle of Duart. After dinner, some unfortunate circumstance occurred which produced a quarrel. Tradition varies in regard to what immediately followed. It seems, however, that Maclean demanded that the other should yield to him possession of the whole island of Islay, of which he then held but the half. Some consideration was to have been given in return for this concession; but Maclean chose to detain as hostages, to ensure the fulfilment of the treaty, the eldest son of Macdonald, then a boy, and also a brother, together with several other persons of some note. Maclean soon after set out for Islay to take possession of that island. His nephew accompanied him, but the other hostages were left in Mull until the whole business should be arranged. What ensued was no more than might have been expected: Macdonald pretended to be disposed for an amicable adjustment of the terms formerly agreed upon, and prevailed on Lachlan More to visit him at his house in Islay, where nothing appeared to create alarm.

After supper, Maclean and his people retired to a barn for rest; but Macdonald soon knocked at the door, and said he had forgot to give his guests their reposing draught, and desired to be admitted for that purpose. A large force had by this time been collected, and Lachlan soon understood that he would be made to suffer for his former conduct. He was determined, however, to make a resolute defence. He stood in the door fully armed, and in his left hand he held his nephew, who lay with him. He was a man of extraordinary size and strength, as the appellation *More* indicates, and his situation required all his prowess. Macdonald, desirous to save the life of his son, agreed to permit Lachlan to quit the barn, which had by this time been set on fire. The greater part of his attendants also followed their chief; but the two Macdonalds, who had first fomented this unhappy quarrel, were consumed in the flames.

Macdonald of Islay having now recovered possession of his son, was determined to put Maclean and all his people to death; but fortunately for them, he had a fall from his horse, by which one of his legs was fractured. This retarded the execution of his fell purpose, and enabled the Earl of Argyle to make a representation of the case to the government. Maclean was permitted to return to Mull; but several of the principal gentlemen of his clan, who had accompanied them to Islay, were retained as hostages for the safety of those who still remained in the same condition at Duart.

Very soon after Maclean's departure from Islay, Macdonald of Ardnamurchan, commonly distinguished by the patronimic of *Mac-vic-Ian*, the son of John's son, arrived there, and falsely informed Macdonald that Lachlan More had destroyed all his hostages on his return home. This was retaliated on Maclean's hostages, who were all put to death, and the next day the other hostages arrived safely from Mull.

This is a specimen of the deplorable state of barbarism into which Scotland sunk during the minority of James the Sixth. The whole kingdom was full of blood and rapine, but the Highlands were in the worst condition of all. For a century afterwards very little amelioration seems to have taken place; but it is pleasing to reflect that for the last fifty years there is not in Europe a country where the law bears more absolute sway than in the Scottish Highlands.

Macdonald and Maclean were both committed to ward, one in the Bass, and the other in the Castle of Edinburgh,

where they were detained for several years. They were liberated on strong assurances of peaceable conduct, and on giving hostages. Maclean was afterwards ordered to join the Earl of Argyle, who took the command of the army appointed to oppose the Earls of Huntly and Errol, then in open rebellion against the government of James the Sixth.

The two armies encountered at Glenlivat, and the rebels were victorious. Argyle, though brave, was young and inexperienced, nor were all his officers faithful to their trust. Innes, in his History of Moray, asserts that some of the principal men of his own name were in correspondence with the enemy; and other writers ascribe much effect to the cannon used by the rebel earls. On this occasion Lachlan More was greatly distinguished for bravery and for prudence, having acted the part of an experienced commander, and gained the applause of both armies.

It were well if he had always confined his warfare to such honourable combats. Soon after we find him again engaged in Islay against his nephew, James Macdonald, Angus, his former antagonist, being dead. On this occasion, it would seem, however, that he was disposed for peace. Lachlan had embraced the Protestant religion; and it was a practice with his Catholic ancestors to walk thrice in procession around the shores of a small island lying in Lochspelvie, invoking success to the expedition on which they were about to be engaged. With singular absurdity, Lachlan resolved to show his contempt for Catholic superstition: he walked thrice around the island, but his ancestors had always walked right about, or in the same course with the sun; but this enlightened Protestant reversed it. The day [illegible] he departed with his forces for Islay, and he never returned. The weather became boisterous, and he was compelled to bear away for Island Nare, in the mouth of Loch Gruinard. A day was appointed for a conference between himself and his nephew; and Lachlan, attended by a small portion of his men, was to be met by Macdonald with an equal number. Macdonald had, however, placed a large body in ambush at some distance. The conference commenced under favourable appearances, but a misunderstanding soon arose, and swords were drawn. A dreadful conflict ensued, and Maclean fought with astonishing bravery. The reserve which had lain concealed joined their friends; but both were on the eve of being defeated, when a body of auxiliaries from the island of Arran arrived, and Lachlan More was killed, with all those who had accompanied him on this fatal expedition.*

His son had remained on the island with a much larger force, but the pacific appearances deceived him, and he neglected to keep the boats afloat. When the fight commenced on shore, he and his men were looking on, but could not launch their heavy boats, or render assistance. The Macdonalds suffered severe loss, and James (afterwards Sir James) was left for dead on the field.

A poor woman of his own clan, assisted by her son, conveyed Lachlan's body on a sledge to the church of Kilchomen, in Islay, where she got him buried. By the jolting of the sledge, the features of the body acquired a particular expression, at which the young man smiled. His name was Macdonald, and his mother was so enraged at his sneer, that she made a thrust at him with a dirk, and wounded him severely.—*Lit. Gazette.*

* Lachlan More was killed in the year 1598.

ALEMOOR:

A TALE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Sad is the wail that floats o'er Alemoor's lake,
And nightly bids her gulfs unbottomed quake,
While moonbeams, sailing o'er her waters blue,
Reveal the frequent tinge of blood-red hue.
The water-birds, with shrill discordant scream,
Oft rouse the peasant from his tranquil dream:
He dreads to raise his slow unclosing eye,
And thinks he hears an infant's feeble cry.—*Leyden.*

CHAPTER I.

IN one of those frequent incursions which the Scottish Borderers used to make into the sister territory, it was the misfortune of Sir John Douglas, a gallant and distinguished warrior, to be taken prisoner by Richard de Mowbray, who, to a naturally proud and vindictive temper, added a bitter and irreconcilable hatred to that branch of the house of Douglas to which his prisoner belonged. Instead of treating the brave and noble youth with that courtesy which the law of arms and the manners of the times authorised, he loaded his limbs with fetters, and threw him into one of the deepest dungeons of his baronial castle of Holme Cultrum. Earl de Mowbray, his father, was then at the English court, in attendance on his sovereign, so that he had none to gainsay his authority, but yielded, without hesitation or restraint, to every impulse of his passions. To what lengths the savage cruelty of his temper might have led him in practising against the life of his youthful prisoner is not known, for he was also summoned to London to assist in the stormy councils of that distracted period.

Meanwhile, Douglas lay on the floor of his dungeon, loaded with fetters, and expecting every hour to be led out to die. No murmur escaped his lips. He waited patiently till the fatal message arrived, only regretting that it had not pleased Heaven to suffer him to die sword in hand, like his brave ancestors. "Yes!" he exclaimed, as he raised his stately and warlike form from the ground, and clashing his fettered hands together, while his dark eye shot fire; "yes! let false tyrannical Mowbray come with all his ruffian band—let them give me death by sword or by cord—my cheek shall not blanch, nor my look quail before them. As a Douglas I have lived, as a Douglas I shall die!" But the expected summons came not. Day after day passed on in sullen monotony, more trying to a brave mind than even the prospect of suffering. No sound broke in on the silence around him, but the daily visit of a veteran man-at-arms, who brought him his scanty meal. No entreaties could induce this man to speak, so that the unfortunate prisoner could only guess at his probable fate. Sometimes despondency, in spite of his better reason, would steal over his mind. "Shall I never again see my noble, my widowed mother? my innocent, playful sister?—never again wander through the green woods of Drumlanrig, or hunt the deer on its lordly domain? Shall my sight never again be greeted by the green earth or cheerful sun? Will these hateful walls enclose me till damp and famine destroy me,

and my withered limbs be left in this charnel-house, a monument of the cruelty and unceasing hatred of De Mowbray?"

Seven long weeks had rolled tediously along when the prisoner was surprised by his allowance being brought by a stranger in the dress of a Cumbrian peasant. Eagerly, rapidly he questioned the man respecting Mowbray, his intentions, and why he had been so long left without being allowed to name a ransom. The peasant told him of De Mowbray's absence, and added that, as there was to be a general invasion of Scotland, all the men-at-arms had been marched away that morning to join their companions, except the warders, by whom he had been ordered to bring food to the prisoner. Joy now thrilled through the heart and frame of the youthful warrior, but he had still enough of caution left to make no further inquiries, but allow his new jailer to depart without exciting his suspicions too early.

It is well known to those who are conversant with the history of that period, that, however bitter the animosities of the two nations were while engaged in actual warfare, yet in times of peace, or even of truce, the commons lived on friendly terms, and carried on even a sort of trade in cattle. All this was known to Sir John, who hoped, through the means of his new attendant, to open a communication with his retainers, if he could not engage him to let him free, and become a follower of the Douglas, whose name was alike dreaded in both nations. But events over which he had no control were even then working for him, and his deliverance was to come from a quarter he thought not of.

At the date of this tale, the ladies of rank had few amusements when compared to those of modern times. Books, even if they could have been procured, would sometimes not have been valued or understood, from the very limited education which, in those days, was allowed to females. Guarded in their inaccessible towers or castles, their only amusement was listening to the tales of pilgrims, or the songs of wandering minstrels, both of whom were always made welcome to the halls of nobles, and whose persons, like those of heralds, were deemed sacred even among contending parties. To be present at a tournament was considered as an event of the first importance, and looked forward to with the highest expectation, and afterwards formed an era in their lives. When such amusements were not to be had, a walk on the ramparts, attended by their trusty maid, was the next resource against the tedium of time. It was during such a walk as this that Emma, only daughter of Earl Mowbray, addressed her attendant as follows:—

"Do you think it possible, Edith, that the prisoner, whom my brother is so solicitous to conceal, can be that noble Douglas of whom we have heard so much, and about whom Graham, the old blind minstrel, sung such gallant verses?"

"Indeed, my sweet lady," replied her attendant, "the prisoner in yonder dungeon is certainly of the house of Douglas, and, as I think, the very Sir John of whom we have heard so much."

"How knowest thou that?" inquired her lady, eagerly.

"I had always my own thoughts of it," whispered Edith cautiously, and drawing nearer her mistress; "but since Ralph of Teesdale succeeded grim old Norman as his keeper, I am almost certain of it. He knows every Douglas of them, and, from his account, though the dungeon was dark, he believes it was Sir John who performed such prodigies of valour at the taking of Alnwick."

"May Heaven, then, preserve and succour him!" sighed the Lady Emma, as she clasped her hands together.

Emma De Mowbray, the only daughter of the most powerful and warlike of the northern earls, was dazzlingly fair, and her very beautiful features were only relieved from the charge of insipidity on the first look, by the lustre of her dark blue eyes, which were shaded by long and beautiful eye-lashes. Her stature was scarcely above the middle size, but so finely proportioned, that the eye of the beholder never tired gazing on it. She was only seventeen, and had not yet been allowed to grace a tournament, her ambitious father having determined to seclude his northern flower till he could astonish the Court of England with her charms, and secure for her such an advantageous settlement as would increase his own power and resources. Thus had Emma grown up the very child of nature and tenderness. Shut out from society of every kind, her imagination had run riot, and her most pleasing hours, when not occupied by devotional duties, were spent in musing over the romantic legends which she had heard either from minstrels, or those adventurers who ofttimes found a home in the castle of a powerful chief, and which were circulated among the domestics till they reached the ear of their youthful lady. These feelings had been unconsciously fostered by her spiritual director, Father Anselm, who, of noble birth himself, had once been a soldier, and delighted, in the long winter evenings, to recount the prowess of his youth; and in the tale of other years, often and often was the noble name of Douglas introduced and dwelt upon with enthusiastic rapture, as he narrated the chief's bravery in the Holy Land. In short, every circumstance combined to feed and excite the feverish exalted imagination of this untutored child. Had her mother lived, the sensibilities of her nature had been cherished and refined, and taught to keep within the bounds of their proper channel. As it was, they were allowed to run riot, and almost led her to overstep the limits of that retiring modesty which is so beautiful in the sex. No sooner, then, had she learnt that Douglas was the captive of her haughty brother, and perhaps doomed to a lingering or ignominious death, than she resolved to attempt his escape, be the consequences what they would. A wild tumultuary feeling took possession of her mind as she came to this resolution. What would the liberated object say to her, or how look his thanks? and, oh! if indeed he proved to be the hero of her day-dreams, how blessed would she be to have it in her power to be his guardian angel! The tear of delight trembled in her eye, as she turned from the bartisan of the castle, and sought the solitude of her chamber.

It was midnight—the last stroke of the deep-toned castle bell had been answered by the echoes from the neighbouring hills, when two shrouded figures stood by the couch of the prisoner. The glare of a small lantern, carried by one of them, awoke Douglas. He sprung to his feet as lightly as if the heavy fetters he was loaded with had been of silk, and in a stern voice told them he was ready. "Be silent and follow us," was the reply of one of the muffled visitors. He bowed in silence, and prepared to leave his dungeon,—not an easy undertaking, when it is remembered that he was so heavily ironed; but the care and ingenuity of his conductors obviated as much as possible even this difficulty; one came on each side, and prevented as much as possible the fetters from clashing on each other. In this manner they hurried him on through a long subterraneous passage, then crossed some courts which seemed overgrown with weeds, and then entered a chapel, where Douglas could perceive a noble tomb surrounded by burning tapers. "You must allow yourself to be blindfolded," said one of them in a sweet, musical, but suppressed voice;

he did so, and no sooner was the bandage made fast, than he heard the snap as of a spring, and was immediately led forward. In a few minutes more he felt he had left the rough stones of the church, and its chill sepulchral air, for a matted floor and a warmer atmosphere; the bandage dropped from his eyes, and he found himself in a small square room, comfortably furnished, with a fire blazing in the chimney; a second look convinced him he was in the private room of an ecclesiastic, and that he was alone.

It need not be told the sagacious reader that this escape was the work of Lady Emma, aided by Father Anselm, and Ralph Teesdale, who was her foster-brother, and therefore bound to serve her almost at the risk of his life—so very strong were such ties then considered. No sooner did Douglas learn from the venerable ecclesiastic to whom he owed his life and liberty, than he pleaded for an interview with all the warmth of gratitude which such a boon could inspire.

Recruited by a night of comfortable repose, and refreshed by wholesome food, our youthful warrior looked more like those of his name than when stretched on the floor of the dungeon. It was the evening of the second day after his liberation, while Douglas was listening to his kind and venerable host's account of the daring deeds by which his ancestor, the good Lord James, had been distinguished, when the door opened, and Lady Emma and her attendant entered. Instantly sinking on one knee, Sir John poured forth his thanks in language so courtly, so refined, yet so earnest and heartfelt, that Lady Emma's heart beat tumultuously, and her eyes became suffused with tears.

"Suffer me," continued Douglas, "to behold the features of her who has indeed been a guardian angel to the descendant of that house who never forgave an injury, nor ever, while breath animated them, forgot a favour."

Lady Emma slowly raised her veil, and the eyes of the youthful pair met, and dwelt on each other with mutual admiration. Again the knight knelt, and, pressing her hand to his lips, vowed that he would ever approve himself her faithful and devoted champion. The conversation then took a less agitating turn, and, in another hour, Lady Emma took her leave of the good father and his interesting companion, in whose favour she could not conceal that she was already inspired with the most fervent feelings. Nor did she chide Edith, who, while she braided the beautiful locks of her mistress, expatiated on the fine form and manly features of Douglas, and rejoiced in his escape.

It was now time for Sir John to make some inquiries of Father Anselm about the state of the country, and if the Scotch had beat back their assailants in the attack made upon them, and learned, to his pleasure and surprise, that the enemy were then too much divided among themselves to think of making reprisals, the whole force of the kingdom being then gathered together to decide the claims of York and Lancaster to the crown of England; that Earl Mowbray and his son, adherents of the queen, were then lying at York with their retainers, ready to close in battle with the adverse party. It might be supposed that this intelligence would inspire the captive with the wish to complete his escape, and return to Scotland. But no. A secret influence —a sort of charm—bound him to the spot; he was fascinated; he had no power to fly, even if the massy gates of the castle had unfolded themselves before him.

Bred up in the camp, Douglas was unused to the small sweet courtesies of life; his hours, when in his paternal

towers of Drumlanrig, were chiefly spent in the chase, or in warlike exercises with his brothers, and the vassals of their house. His mother, a lady of noble birth, descended from the bold Seatons, encouraged such feelings, and kept up that state in her castle and retinue which befitted her high rank. His sister Bertha was a mere child, whom he used to fondle and caress in his moments of relaxation. But now a new world broke upon his astonished senses. He had seen a young, a beautiful lady, to whom he owed life and liberty, who, unsought, had generously come forward to his relief. Of the female character he knew nothing; if he did think of them, it was either invested with the matronly air of his mother, or the playful fondness of his sister. His emotions were new and delightful, and he longed to tell his fair deliverer all he felt; and he did tell her, and—she listened.

But why prolong the tale? Interview succeeded interview, till even Father Anselm became aware of their growing attachment. Alas! the good priest saw his error too late; and although, even then, he attempted to reason with both on the consequences of their passion, yet his arguments made no impression.

'You will turn war into peace," whispered Lady Emma, as she listened to her spiritual director, "by healing the feud between the families."

"And you will, by uniting us," boldly exclaimed the youthful lover, "give to the Mowbrays a friend who will never fail in council or in field."

Overcome by these and similar arguments, the tender-hearted Anselm at last consented to join their hands. At the solemn hour of midnight, when the menials and retainers were bound in sleep, an agitated yet happy group stood by the altar of the castle chapel. There might be seen the noble form of Douglas, with a rich mantle wrapped round him, and the fair and beautiful figure of his bride, as she blushingly left the arm of her attendant to bestow her hand where her heart was already given. The light of the sacred tapers fell full upon the reverend form of Father Anselm, and the chapel reverberated the solemn words he uttered as he invoked Heaven to bless their union. The athletic figure of Ralph Teesdale was seen near the door to guard against surprise.

CHAPTER II.

NOTHING occurred for some time to mar the harmony and peace of the married lovers. At length their tranquillity was broken by accounts of the fatal and bloody battle of Towton, which gave a death-blow to the interests of the Lancastrians. This news spread consternation among the small party at Holme Cultrum. The question was, whether to remain and boldly confront the Mowbrays, or fly towards Scotland and endeavour to reach Drumlanrig; but the distracted state of the country forbade this plan, and the arrival of some fugitives from the field of battle having brought the intelligence that both Earl Mowbray and his son were unwounded, and had fled to France, determined the party to remain where they were. This, however, they soon repented of, when they understood that a large body of Yorkists were in full march northwards to demolish all the castles held by the insurgent noblemen. This trumpet-note roused the warlike spirit of Douglas. He boldly showed himself to the soldiers, and swore to defend the castle to the last, or be buried in its ruins, if they would stand by him. But the men-at-arms, either unwilling

to fight under a stranger, or panic-struck at their late defeat, coldly met this proposal; and while Father Anselm and Douglas were examining the outward works, they made their escape by a postern, leaving only two or three infirm old men, besides the menials, to resist the conquering army. Sir John, undaunted by the dastardly behaviour of the men, still continued his preparations, and inspired such courage into the hearts of his little garrison, that they vowed to stand by him to the last. But these preparations proved needless: Edward, either allured by the prospect of greater booty in some richer castle, or afraid of harassing his troops, turned aside into the midland counties, and left the bold-hearted Douglas to the enjoyment of his wife's society.

Months of unalloyed felicity were theirs; and while England was torn by civil dissensions,—when the father pursued the son, and the son the father, and the most sacred bonds of nature were rent asunder at the shrine of party, and while the unburied dead gave the fields of merry England the appearance of a charnel-house,—all was peace, love, and joy within the walls of Holme Cultrum. Seated in the lofty halls of her fathers, Lady Emma appeared the personification of content; hers was indeed that felicity she had not dared to hope for even in her wildest day-dreams. It was indeed a lovely sight to behold her leaning on the arm of her noble husband, listening to his details of well-fought fields; her eye now sparkling with hope, and her cheek now blanched with terror, as they paced in the twilight the ample battlements of the castle: it was like the ivy clinging and clasping round the stately oak. If at such moments Douglas wearied of the monotony of existence, and half-wished he was once more in the front of battle, he had only to look in the soft blue eye of his Emma, press her to his heart, and everything else was forgot.

Summer had passed away, and the fields wore the golden livery of autumn. It was on a beautiful evening, while Douglas, Lady Emma, and Father Anselm, were enjoying the soothing breeze, when Ralph Teesdale rushed before them, his face pale and his trembling accents proclaiming his terror.

"Fly, my lord!" addressing Douglas; "fly, for you are betrayed; the earl is come, at the head of a band of mercenaries, and vows to have your head stuck on the battlements before to-morrow's sun rise."

"I will not fly," said Douglas; "boldly will I confront the earl, and claim my wife."

"My father is good, is kind; he will yield to the prayers and tears of his Emma."

"Alas, alas! my dearest and honoured lady," rejoined her foster-brother, "your noble father is no more, and 'tis your brother who now seeks the life of Douglas."

The first part of the sentence was only heard by Lady Emma, who fell senseless into the arms of her husband, and was immediately conveyed to her chamber by her ever-ready attendant. A hasty council was then held between Father Anselm and Douglas.

"You had better take the advice of that faithful fellow, and give way. You know," continued the priest, "the dreadful temper and baleful passions of Richard de Mowbray. Not only your own life, but that of your wife, may fall a sacrifice to his fury, were he to find you. I am well aware that he has long considered his sister as an encumbrance on his succession, and will either cause her to be shut up in a convent, or secretly destroyed."

Douglas shuddered at the picture, and asked the holy father what he should do.

"Retreat to my secret chamber, in the first instance; it were madness, and worse, to attempt to exclude the Earl de

Mowbray from his castle, even if we had sufficient strength within, which you know we have not. I shall cause Lady Emma to be conveyed there also when she recovers; we must resolve on some scheme instantly; the secret of the spring is unknown to all but your faithful friends."

Sir John at length complied, and was shortly afterwards joined in his retreat by Lady Emma and Edith. Flight—instant flight—was resolved on; and the timid and gentle Emma, who had hardly ever ventured beyond the walls of the castle, declared she was ready to dare everything rather than be torn from her husband, or be the means of his being consigned to endless captivity, or, it might be, a cruel and lingering death. Father Anselm set off again in search of Ralph, and soon returned with the joyful intelligence that De Mowbray was still at a castle a few miles distant; that those of his followers who had already arrived were then carousing deeply; and as soon as the first watch was set, a pair of fleet horses would be waiting at the small postern, to which Douglas and his lady could steal unobserved, wrapt in horsemen's cloaks. The short interval which intervened was spent by Edith in making such preparations as were required for the travellers, and by the churchman in fervent petitions to Heaven for their safety. At length the expected signal was given from the chapel, and the agitated party stood at the low postern, where Ralph waited with the horses. It was some moments before the lady could disengage herself from the arms of her weeping attendant; but the father hurried them away, and soon their figures were lost in the gloom, and their horses' tread became faint in the distance.

Well it was for the fugitives that their plans had been so quickly executed, for ere midnight the trumpets of De Mowbray sounded before the castle gate. There all was uproar and confusion. The means of refreshment had been given with unsparing hand, and the wild spirits of the mercenaries whom he commanded were then in a state bordering on stupefaction from their lengthened debauch. The few who accompanied him were not much better, and he himself had all his evil passions inflamed by the wine he had quaffed with the Lord of Barnard Castle. Hastily throwing himself from his reeking charger, he entered his castle sword in hand, and ordered his sister to be brought before him, and the castle to be searched, from turret to foundation stone, for the presumptuous Douglas. Pale, trembling, and in tears, Edith threw herself at his feet.

"O, my good lord, my lady, my dear lady is ill, very ill, ever since she heard of the death of her honoured father. To-morrow she will endeavour to see you."

"Off, woman!" he exclaimed. "This night I must and shall see my sister, dead or alive," and he arose with fury in his looks.

But Wolfstone, his lieutenant, a brave young man, stepped before him, and, drawing his sword, exclaimed—

"You must pass over my dead body ere you break in upon the sacred sorrows of Lady Emma."

There was something in the brave bearing of the gallant foreigner which even De Mowbray respected, for he lowered his voice, and stealing his hand from his dagger, said—

"And where is Father Anselm, that he comes not to welcome me to the halls of my fathers?"

"He is gone," returned Edith, "to the neighbouring monastery, to say a mass for the honoured dead," and she devoutly crossed herself, turning her tearful eye on Wolfstone, who, with the most respectful tone, added—

"Go, faithful maiden! say to your lady that Conrad Wolfstone guards her chamber till her pleasure is known."

"Now lead in our prisoner there;" but a dozen of voices exclaimed against further duty that night.

"He sleeps sound in his dungeon," said De Mowbray's squire; "and to-morrow you may make him sleep sounder, if you will. A cup of wine would be more to the purpose, methinks, after our long and toilsome march."

A hundred voices joined in the request. The wine was brought, and the tyrant soon forgot his projects of vengeance in a prolonged debauch. He slept too—that unnatural monster slept—and dreamt of his victims, and the sweet revenge that was awaiting him. It was owing to the presence of mind of Ralph that the flight of Douglas was not discovered. He had the address to persuade the half-inebriated soldiers that the prisoner was actually securely fettered in the dungeon which he had all along occupied. No sooner did he see them engaged in the new carousal than he hastened to join Edith in the secret chamber, where they united with Father Anselm in his devotions, and prayed for blessings on the head of their noble lord and lady.

Meanwhile the fugitives had reached Scotland, and were now leisurely pursuing their way, thinking themselves far beyond the reach of pursuit. On their first crossing the border, a shepherd's hut afforded the agitated Lady Emma an hour's repose and a draught of milk. The morning air revived her spirits, and once more she smiled sweetly as her husband bade her welcome to his native soil. From the fear of pursuit, they durst not take the most direct road to Drumlanrig, but continued to follow the narrow tracks among the hills, known only to huntsmen and shepherds.

It was now evening; the sun was sinking among a lofty range of mountains, tinging their heathy summits with a purple hue, as his broad disc seemed to touch their tops. The travellers were entering a narrow defile, at the end of which a small but beautiful mountain lake or loch burst upon their sight; its waters lay delightfully still and placid, reflecting aslant a few alder bushes which grew on its banks, while the canna, or wild cotton grass, reared its white head here and there among the bushes of wild thyme which sent their perfume far on the air. The wild and melancholy note of the curlew, as she was roused from her nest by the travellers, or the occasional bleat of a lamb, was all that broke the universal stillness.

"Ah, my love," said Lady Emma, riding up close to her husband, "what a scene of peace and tranquillity! Why could we not live here, far from courts and camps, from battle and bloodshed? But," she continued, looking fondly and fixedly at her husband, "this displeases you,—think of it only as a fond dream, and pardon me."

"True, my Emma," returned Douglas, "these are but fond dreams; the state of our poor country commands every man to do his duty, and how could the followers of the Bloody Heart sheath their swords, and live like bondsmen? Never—never! But let us ride on now; the smoke from yonder cabin on the brow of the hill promises shelter for the night, and, ere to-morrow's sun go down, you shall be welcomed as the daughter of one of the noblest dames of Scotland. Ride on—the night wears apace."

Scarcely had the words passed his lips, when the quick tramp of a steed behind caused him to turn round. It was Mowbray, his eyes glaring with fury, and his frame trembling with rage and excitement.

"Turn, traitor! coward! robber! turn, and meet your just punishment!"

"Coward was never heard by a Douglas unrevenged," was the haughty answer to this defiance, as he wheeled round to meet the challenger, at the

same time waving to Lady Emma to ride on; but she became paralysed with fear and surprise, and sat on her palfrey motionless. Both drew their swords, and the combat began. It was furious but short: Douglas unhorsed his antagonist, and then, leaping from his own steed, went to assist in raising him, unwilling farther to harm the brother of his wife. But oh, the treachery and cruelty of the wicked! No sooner did the tender-hearted Douglas kneel down beside him to ascertain the nature of his wounds, than Mowbray drew his secret dagger, and stabbed him to the heart.

The moon rose pale and cold on the waters of this inland lake, and showed distinctly the body of a female lying near its shore, while a dark heap, resembling men asleep, was seen at a little distance on a rising ground,—the mournful howl of a large dog only broke the death-like stillness. Soon, however, a horseman was seen descending the pass; he was directed by the dog to the female, who still lay as if life indeed had fled. He sprung from his horse, and brought water from the lake, which he sprinkled on her face and hands. Long his efforts were unavailing, but at last the pulse of life began once more to beat, the eye opened, and she wildly exclaimed—

"O do not kill him!"

"He is safe for me, lady," said the well-known voice of Ralph Teesdale.

"Thou here, my trusty friend!" murmured Lady Emma; "bear me to Douglas, and all may yet be well."

She could utter no more; insensibility again seized her, and Ralph, lifting her up, bore her in his arms to what he supposed to be a shepherd's cottage, but found it only a deserted summer sheiling. He was almost distracted, and, laying down his precious burden, wrapped in his horseman's cloak, he ran out again in search of assistance, though hardly hoping to find it in such a wild district, still closely followed by the dog, which continued at intervals the same dismal howl which had attracted the notice of Ralph as they ascended the hill. The sad note of the hound was answered by a loud barking, and never fell sounds more welcome on the ear of the faithful vassal. He followed the sounds, and they led him to a hut tenanted by a shepherd and his wife. His tale was soon told. They hastened with him to the deserted sheiling, where they found the object of their solicitude in a situation to demand instant and female assistance. There, amid the wilds of Scotland, in a comfortless cabin, the heir of the warlike and noble Sir John Douglas first saw the light. Long ere perfect consciousness returned, Lady Emma was removed to the more comfortable home of the shepherd, and there his wife paid her every possible attention.

The care of Ralph consigned the remains of the rival chiefs to one grave. It was supposed that De Mowbray had expired soon after giving Douglas the fatal stroke, as his fingers still firmly grasped the hilt of his dagger. Their horses and accoutrements were disposed of by the shepherd, and thus furnished a fund for the maintenance of the noble lady, who was so strangely cast upon their care. Many weeks elapsed ere she was aware she had neither husband nor brother.

Time, which calms or extinguishes every passion of the human heart, had exerted its healing influence over the mind of Lady Emma. She sat watching the gambols of her son on the banks of the peaceful lake, whose waters had first recalled her to life on the disastrous evening of his birth. There was even a smile on her pale thin lip, as he tottered to her knee, and laid there a handful of yellow wild-

flowers. She clasped the blooming boy to her heart, murmuring, "My Douglas!" On her first awakening to a full sense of her loss and forlorn condition, it was only by presenting her son to her that she could be persuaded to live; and when her strength returned, she determined to go to Drumlanrig, and claim protection for herself and child. But the prudence of Ralph suggested the propriety of his first going to ascertain the state of the family; and recommending his lady to the care of Gilbert Scott and his kind-hearted wife, he set out on his embassy. But sad was his welcome: the noble pile was a heap of blackened and smoking ruins, and the lady fled no one knew whither. Sad and sorrowful he returned to the mountain retreat, and was surprised at the calmness with which his honoured mistress heard his tale. Alas! he knew not that the pang she had already suffered made every other loss appear trivial!

The lonely sheiling was repaired and furnished. Here Lady Emma, in placid content, nursed her child, attended by her faithful foster-brother, who made occasional excursions to the neighbouring town to supply her with any necessary she required. On an occasion of this kind, when the lovely boy was nearly two years old, she sat at the door of her humble dwelling, listening to his sweet prattle. It was the first time he had attempted to say the most endearing of all words. She forgot her sorrows, and was almost happy. Her attention was soon called to some domestic concern within the cottage. The boy was on his accustomed seat at the door, when a shrill and piercing scream caused her to run out. Need her anguish and despair be painted, when she saw her lovely boy borne aloft in the air in the talons of an eagle? To run, to scream, to shout, was the first movement of the frenzied mother; but vain had been her efforts, had she not been almost immediately joined by some of her neighbours, whose united efforts made the fatigued bird quit its prey and drop it into the loch. Many a willing heart, many an active hand, was ready to save the boy. He was delivered to his mother, but, alas! only as a drenched and nerveless corse. Human nature could endure no more. Her brain reeled, and reason fled for ever. Her faithful and attached follower returned to find his lady a wandering maniac. Year after year did he follow her footsteps, nor, till death put a period to her sufferings, did his care slacken for one instant. After he had seen her laid by her husband and brother, he bade adieu to the simple inhabitants, and it is supposed he fell in some of the border raids of the period, as he was never more heard of.

Reader, this tale is no idle fiction. On the borders of Alemoor Loch, in Selkirkshire, may still be seen a small clump of moss-grown trees, among which were one or two of the crab-apple kind, which showed that here the hand of cultivation had once been. Within this enclosure was a small green mound, to which tradition, in reference to the above story, gave the name of the Lady's Seat; and about half a mile to the south-west of the lonely loch is an oblong bench, with a rising ground above, still called the Chieftain's Grave.—*Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.*

TIBBY FOWLER.

By John Mackay Wilson.

Tibby Fowler o' the glen,
A' the lads are wooin' at her.—*Old Song.*

All our readers have heard and sung of "Tibby Fowler o' the glen;" but they may not all be aware that the glen referred to lies within about four miles of Berwick. No one has seen and not admired the romantic amphitheatre below Edrington Castle, through which the Whitadder coils like a beautiful serpent glittering in the sun, and sports in fantastic curves beneath the pasture-clad hills, the gray ruin, the mossy and precipitous crag, and the pyramid of woods, whose branches, meeting from either side, bend down and kiss the glittering river, till its waters seem lost in their leafy bosom. Now, gentle reader, if you have looked upon the scene we have described, we shall make plain to you the situation of Tibby Fowler's cottage, by a homely map, which is generally *at hand.* You have only to bend your arm, and suppose your shoulder to represent Edrington Castle, your hand Clarabad, and near the elbow you will have the spot where "ten cam rowing ower the water;" a little nearer to Clarabad is the "lang dyke side," and immediately at the foot of it is the site of Tibby's cottage, which stood upon the Edrington side of the river; and a little to the west of the cottage, you will find a shadowy row of palm-trees, planted, as tradition testifieth, by the hands of Tibby's father, old Ned Fowler, of whom many speak until this day. The locality of the song was known to many; and if any should be inclined to inquire how we became acquainted with the other particulars of our story, we have only to reply, that that belongs to a class of questions to which we do not return an answer. There is no necessity for a writer of tales taking for his motto—*vitam impendere vero.* Tibby's parents had the character of being "bien bodies;" and, together with their own savings, and a legacy that had been left them by a relative, they were enabled at their death to leave their daughter in possession of five hundred pounds. This was esteemed a fortune in those days, and would afford a very respectable foundation for the rearing of one yet. Tibby, however, was left an orphan, as well as the sole mistress of five hundred pounds, and the proprietor of a neat and well-furnished cottage, with a piece of land adjoining, before she had completed her nineteenth year; and when we add that she had hair like the raven's wings when the sun glances upon them, cheeks where the lily and the rose seemed to have lent their most delicate hues, and eyes like twin dew-drops glistening beneath a summer moonbeam, with a waist and an arm rounded like a model for a sculptor, it is not to be wondered at that "a' the lads cam wooin' at her." But she had a woman's heart as well as woman's beauty and the portion of an heiress. She found her cottage surrounded, and her path beset, by a herd of grovelling pounds-shillings-and-pence hunters, whom her very soul loathed. The sneaking wretches, who profaned the name of lovers, seemed to have *money* written on their very eyeballs, and the sighs they professed to heave in her presence sounded to her like stifled groans of—*Your gold—your gold!* She did not hate them,

but she despised their meanness; and as they one by one gave up persecuting her with their addresses, they consoled themselves with retorting upon her the words of the adage, that "her *pride* would have a fall!" But it was not from pride that she rejected them, but because her heart was capable of love—of love, pure, devoted, unchangeable, springing from being beloved, and because her feelings were sensitive as the quivering aspen, which trembles at the rustling of an insect's wing. Amongst her suitors there might have been some who were disinterested; but the meanness and sordid objects of many caused her to regard all with suspicion, and there was none among the number to whose voice her bosom responded as the needle turns to the magnet, and frequently from a cause as inexplicable. She had resolved that the man to whom she gave her hand should wed her for herself—and for herself only. Her parents had died in the same month; and about a year after their death she sold the cottage and the piece of ground, and took her journey towards Edinburgh, where the report of her being a "great fortune," as her neighbours termed her, might be unknown. But Tibby, although a sensitive girl, was also, in many respects, a prudent one. Frequently she had heard her mother, when she had to take but a shilling from the legacy, quote the proverb, that it was

> Like a cow in a clout,
> That soon wears out.

Proverbs we know are in bad taste, but we quote it, because by its repetition the mother produced a deeper impression on her daughter's mind than could have been effected by a volume of sentiment. Bearing therefore in her memory the maxim of her frugal parent, Tibby deposited her money in the only bank, we believe, that was at that period in the Scottish capital, and hired herself as a child's maid in the family of a gentleman who occupied a house in the neighbourhood of Restalrig. Here the story of her fortune was unknown, and Tibby was distinguished only for a kind heart and a lovely countenance. It was during the summer months, and Leith Links became her daily resort; and there she was wont to walk, with a child in her arms and leading another by the hand, for there she could wander by the side of the sounding sea; and her heart still glowed for her father's cottage and its fairy glen, where she had often heard the voice of its deep waters, and she felt the sensation which we believe may have been experienced by many who have been born within hearing of old ocean's roar, that wherever they may be, they hear the murmur of its billows as the voice of a youthful friend; and she almost fancied, as she approached the sea, that she drew nearer the home which sheltered her infancy. She had been but a few weeks in the family we have alluded to, when, returning from her accustomed walk, her eyes met those of a young man habited as a seaman. He appeared to be about five-and-twenty, and his features were rather manly than handsome. There was a dash of boldness and confidence in his countenance; but as the eyes of the maiden met his, he turned aside as if abashed, and passed on. Tibby blushed at her foolishness, but she could not help it; she felt interested in the stranger. There was an expression, a language, an inquiry in his gaze, she had never witnessed before. She would have turned round to cast a look after him, but she blushed deeper at the thought, and modesty forbade it. She walked on for a few minutes, upbraiding herself for entertaining the silly wish, when the child who walked by her side fell a few yards behind. She turned round to call him by his name. Tibby

was certain that she had no motive but to call the child, and though she did steal a sidelong glance towards the spot where she had passed the stranger, it was a mere accident; it could not be avoided—at least so the maiden wished to persuade her conscience against her conviction; but that glance revealed to her the young sailor, not pursuing the path on which she had met him, but following her within the distance of a few yards, and until she reached her master's door she heard the sound of his footsteps behind her. She experienced an emotion between being pleased and offended at his conduct, though we suspect the former eventually predominated; for the next day she was upon the Links as usual, and there also was the young seaman, and again he followed her to within sight of her master's house. How long this sort of dumb love-making, or the pleasures of diffidence, continued, we cannot tell. Certain it is that at length he spoke, wooed, and conquered; and about a twelvemonth after their first meeting, Tibby Fowler became the wife of William Gordon, the mate of a foreign trader. On the second week after their marriage, William was to sail upon a long, long voyage, and might not be expected to return for more than twelve months. This was a severe trial for poor Tibby, and she felt as if she would not be able to stand up against it. As yet her husband knew nothing of her dowry, and for this hour she had reserved its discovery. A few days before their marriage she had drawn her money from the bank and deposited it in her chest.

"No, Willie, my ain Willie," she cried, "ye maunna, ye winna leave me already: I have neither faither, mother, brother, nor kindred; naebody but you, Willie; only you in the wide world; and I am a stranger here, and ye winna leave your Tibby. Say that ye winna, Willie?" And she wrung his hand, gazed in his face, and wept.

"I maun gang, dearest; I maun gang," said Willie, and pressed her to his breast; "but the thocht o' my ain wifie will mak the months chase ane anither like the moon driving shadows ower the sea. There's nae danger in the voyage, hinny; no a grain o' danger; sae dinna greet; but come, kiss me, Tibby, and when I come hame I'll mak ye leddy o' them a'."

"Oh no, no, Willie!" she replied; "I want to be nae leddy; I want naething but my Willie. Only say that ye'll no gang, and here's something here, something for ye to look at." And she hurried to her chest, and took from it a large leathern pocket-book that had been her father's, and which contained her treasure, now amounting to somewhat more than six hundred pounds. In a moment she returned to her husband; she threw her arms around his neck; she thrust the pocket-book into his bosom. "There, Willie, there!" she exclaimed; "that is yours—my faither placed it in my hand wi' a blessing, and wi' the same blessing I transfer it to you; but dinna, dinna leave me." Thus saying, she hurried out of the room. We will not attempt to describe the astonishment, we may say the joy, of the fond husband, on opening the pocket-book and finding the unlooked-for dowry. However intensely a man may love a woman, there is little chance that her putting an unexpected portion of six hundred pounds into his hands will diminish his attachment; nor did it diminish that of William Gordon. He relinquished his intention of proceeding on the foreign voyage, and purchased a small coasting vessel, of which he was both owner and commander. Five years of unclouded prosperity passed over them, and Tibby had become the mother of three fair children. William sold his small vessel, and purchased a larger one, and in fitting it

up all the gains of his five successful years were swallowed up. But trade was good. She was a beautiful brig, and he had her called the *Tibby Fowler*. He now took a fond farewell of his wife and little ones upon a foreign voyage which was not calculated to exceed four months, and which held out high promise of advantage. But four, eight, twelve months passed away, and there was no tidings of the *Tibby Fowler*. Britain was then at war; there were enemies' ships and pirates upon the sea, and there had been fierce storms and hurricanes since her husband left; and Tibby thought of all these things and wept; and her lisping children asked her when their father would return, for he had promised presents to all, and she answered, to-morrow, and to-morrow, and turned from them, and wept again. She began to be in want, and at first she received assistance from some of the friends of their prosperity; but all hope of her husband's return was now abandoned. The ship was not insured, and the mother and her family were reduced to beggary. In order to support them, she sold one article of furniture after another, until what remained was seized by the landlord in security for his rent. It was then that Tibby and her children, with scarce a blanket to cover them, were cast friendless upon the streets, to die or to beg. To the last resource she could not yet stoop, and from the remnants of former friendship she was furnished with a basket and a few trifling wares, with which, with her children by her side, she set out, with a broken and sorrowful heart, wandering from village to village. She had journeyed in this manner for some months, when she drew near her native glen, and the cottage that had been her father's—that had been her own—stood before her. She had travelled all the day and sold nothing. Her children were pulling by her tattered gown, weeping and crying, "Bread, mother, give us bread!" and her own heart was sick with hunger.

"Oh, wheesht, my darlings, wheesht!" she exclaimed, and she fell upon her knees, and threw her arms round the necks of all the three, "You will get bread soon; the Almighty will not permit my bairns to perish; no, no, ye shall have bread."

In despair she hurried to the cottage of her birth. The door was opened by one who had been a rejected suitor. He gazed upon her intently for a few seconds; and she was still young, being scarce more than six-and-twenty, and in the midst of her wretchedness yet lovely.

"Gude gracious, Tibby Fowler!" he exclaimed, "is that you? Poor creature! are ye seeking charity? Weel, I think ye'll mind what I said to you now, that your pride would have a fa'!"

While the heartless owner of the cottage yet spoke, a voice behind her was heard exclaiming, "It is her! it is her! my ain Tibby and her bairns!"

At the well-known voice, Tibby uttered a wild scream of joy, and fell senseless on the earth; but the next moment her husband, William Gordon, raised her to his breast. Three weeks before, he had returned to Britain, and traced her from village to village, till he found her in the midst of their children, on the threshold of the place of her nativity. His story we need not here tell. He had fallen into the hands of the enemy; he had been retained for months on board of their vessel; and when a storm had arisen, and hope was gone, he had saved her from being lost and her crew from perishing. In reward for his services, his own vessel had been restored to him, and he was returned to his country, after an absence of eighteen months, richer than when he left, and laden with honours. The rest is soon told. After Tibby and her husband had wept upon each other's neck, and he had kissed his children,

and again their mother, with his youngest child on one arm, and his wife resting on the other, he hastened from the spot that had been the scene of such bitterness and transport. In a few years more, William Gordon having obtained a competency, they re-purchased the cottage in the glen, where Tibby Fowler lived to see her children's children, and died at a good old age in the house in which she had been born—the remains of which, we have only to add, for the edification of the curious, may be seen until this day.

DANIEL CATHIE, TOBACCONIST.

DANIEL CATHIE was a reputable dealer in snuff, tobacco, and candles, in a considerable market town in Scotland. His shop had, externally, something neat and enticing about it. In the centre of one window glowed a transparency of a ferocious-looking Celt, bonneted, plaided, and kilted, with his unsheathed claymore in one hand, and his ram's-horn mull in the other; intended, no doubt, to emblem to the spectator, that from thence he recruited his animal spirits, drawing courage from the titillation of every pinch. Around him were tastefully distributed jars of different dimensions, bearing each the appropriate title of the various compounds within, from Maccuba and Lundy Foot down to Beggar's Brown and Irish Blackguard. In the other, one half was allotted to tobacco pipes of all dimensions, tastefully arranged, so as to form a variety of figures, such as crosses, triangles, and squares; decorated at intervals with rolls of twist, serpentinings of pigtail, and monticuli of shag. The upper half displayed candles, distributed with equal exhibition of taste, from the prime four in the pound down to the halfpenny dip; some of a snowy whiteness, and others of an aged and delicate yellow tinge; enticing to the eyes of experienced housewives and spectacled cognoscenti. Over the door rode a swarthy son of Congo, with broad nostrils, and eyes whose whites were fearfully dilated,—astride on a tobacco hogshead,—his woolly head bound with a coronal of feathers, a quiver peeping over his shoulder, and a pipe in his cheeks blown up for the eternity of his wooden existence, in the ecstasy of inhalation.

Daniel himself, the autocrat of this domicile, was a little squat fellow, five feet and upwards, of a rosy complexion, with broad shoulders, and no inconsiderable rotundity of paunch. His eye was quick and sparkling, with something of an archness in its twinkle, as if he loved a joke occasionally, and could wink at any one who presumed so far in tampering with his shrewdness. His forehead was bald, as well as no small portion of either temple; and the black curls, which projected above his ears, gave to his face the appearance of more than its actual breadth, which was scantily relieved by a slight blue spotted handkerchief, loosely tied around a rather apoplectic neck.

His dress was commonly a bottle-green jacket, single-breasted, and square in the tails; a striped cotton waistcoat; velveteen breeches, and light blue ridge-and-furrow worsted stockings. A watch-chain, of a broad steel pattern, hung glittering before him, at which depended a small gold seal, a white

almond-shaped shell, and a perforated Queen Anne's sixpence. Over all this lower display, suppose that you fasten a clean, glossy linen apron, and you have his entire portrait and appearance.

From very small beginnings he had risen, by careful industry, to a respectable place in society, and was now the landlord of the property he had for many years only rented.

Matters prospered, and he got on by slow but steady paces. Business began to extend its circle around him, and his customers became more respectable and genteel.

In a short time Daniel opened accounts with his banker. His establishment became more extensive; and after the lapse of a few not unimproved years, he took his place in the first rank of the merchants of a populous burgh.

His lengthening purse and respectable character pointed him out as a fit candidate for city honours, and the town-council pitched upon him as an eligible person to grace their board. This was a new field opened for him. His reasoning powers were publicly called into play; and he had, what he had never before been accustomed to, luxurious eating and drinking, and both without being obliged to put his hand into his breeches-pocket. Daniel was a happy man—

> No dolphin ever was so gay
> Upon the tropic sea.

He now cogitated with his own mighty mind on the propriety of entering upon the matrimonial estate, and of paying his worship to the blind god. With the precision of a man of business, he took down in his note-book a list of the ladies who, he thought, might be fit candidates for the honour he intended them, the merits of the multitude being settled, in his mind, in exact accordance with the supposed extent of their treasures. Let not the reader mistake the term. By treasure he neither meant worth nor beauty, but the article which can be paid down in bullion or in bank-notes, possessing the magic properties of adding field to field, and tenement to tenement.

One after another the pen was drawn through their names, as occasion offered of scrutinising their means more clearly, or as lack-success obliged him, until the candidates were reduced to a couple; to wit—Miss Jenny Drybones, a tall spinster, lean and ill-looking, somewhat beyond her grand climacteric; and Mrs Martha Bouncer, a brisk widow, fat, fair, and a few years on the better side of forty.

Miss Jenny, from her remote youth upwards, had been housekeeper to her brother, a retired wine merchant, who departed this life six years before, without occasioning any very general lamentation; having been a man of exceedingly strict habits of business, according to the jargon of his friends; that is to say, in plain English, a keen, dull, plodding, avaricious old knave.

But he was rich, that was one felicity; therefore he had friends. It is a great pity that such people ever die, as their worth, or, in other words, their wealth, cannot gain currency in the other world; but die he did, in spite of twenty thousand pounds and the doctor, who was not called in till death had a firm grip of the old miser's windpipe, through which respiration came scant and slow, almost like the vacant yawns of a broken bellows.

Expectant friends were staggered, as by a thunder-stroke, when the read will, too legal for their satisfaction, left Miss Jenny in sure and undivided possession of goods and chattels all and sundry.

For the regular period she mourned with laudable zeal, displaying black feathers, quilled ruffles, crape veils, and starched weepers, in great and unwonted prodigality, which no one objected to, or cavilled about, solely because no one had any business to do so.

It was evident that her views of life from that era assumed a new aspect, and the polar winter of her features exhibited something like an appearance of incipient thaw; but the downy chin, wrinkled brow, and pinched nose, were still, alas! too visible. Accordingly, it is more than probable that, instead of renewing her youth like the eagles, she had only made a bold and laudable attempt to *rifacciamento*, in thus lighting up her features with a more frequent and general succession of smiles.

No one can deny that, in as far as regards externals, Miss Jenny mourned lugubriously and well, not stinting the usually allotted number of calendar months. These passed away, and so did black drapery; garments brightening by progressive but rapid strides. Ere the twelve months expired, Miss Jenny flaunted about in colours as gaudy as those of "the tiger-moth's deep damasked wings,"—the counterpart of the bird of paradise, the rival of the rainbow.

Widow Martha Bouncer was a lady of a different stamp. Her features still glowed in the freshness of youthful beauty, though the symmetry of her person was a little destroyed by a tendency to corpulency. She dressed well; and there was a liveliness and activity about her motions, together with an archness in her smile, which captivated the affections of the tobacconist, rather more than was compatible with his known and undisguised hankering after the so-called good things of this life, the flesh-pots of Egypt.

Mrs Bouncer was the widow of a captain in a marching regiment; consequently she had seen a good deal of the world, and had a budget of adventures ever open for the admiration of the listening customer. Sometimes it might even be objected, that her tongue went a little too glibly; but she had a pretty face and a musical voice, and seldom failed in being attended to.

The captain did not, as his profession might lead us to surmise, decamp to the other world, after having swallowed a bullet, and dropped the death-dealing blade from his blood-besmeared hand on the field of battle, but quietly in his bed, with three pairs of excellent blankets over him, not reckoning a curiously quilted counterpane. Long anticipation lessens the shock of fate; consequently the grief of his widow was not of that violent and overwhelming kind which a more sharply-wound-up catastrophe is apt to occasion; but, having noticed the slow but gradual approaches of the grim tyrant, in the symptoms of swelled ankles, shrivelled features, troublesome cough, and excessive debility, the event came upon her as an evil long foreseen; and the sorrow occasioned by the exit of the captain was sustained with becoming fortitude.

Having been fully as free of his sacrifices to Bacchus as to the brother of Bellona, the captain left his mate in circumstances not the most flourishing; but she was enabled to keep up appearances, and to preserve herself from the gulf of debt, by an annuity bequeathed to her by her father, and by the liberality of the widows' fund.

Time passed on at its usual careless jog-trot; and animal spirits, being a gift of nature, like all strong natural impulses, asserted their legitimate sway. Mrs Martha began to smile and simper as formerly. Folks remarked, that black suited her complexion; and Daniel Cathie could not help giving breath to the gallant remark, as he was discharging her last year's account, that he never before had seen her looking half so well.

On this hint the lady wrought. Daniel was a greasy lubberly civilian to be sure, and could not escort her about with powdered collar, laced beaver, and glittering epaulettes; but he was a substantial fellow, not amiss as to looks, and with regard to circumstances,

possessing everything to render a wife comfortable and snug. Elysian happiness, Mrs Martha was too experienced a stager to expect on this side of the valley of death. Moreover, she had been tossed about sufficiently in the world, and was heartily tired of a wandering life. The height of her wise ambition, therefore, reached no higher than a quiet settlement and a comfortable domicile. She knew that the hour of trial was come, and sedulously set herself to work, directing against Daniel the whole artillery of her charms. She passed before his door every morning in her walk; and sometimes stood with her pretty face directed to the shop window, as if narrowly examining some article in it. She ogled him as he sat in church; looking as if she felt happy at seeing him seated with the bailies; and Daniel was never met abroad, but the lady drew off her silken glove, and yielded a milk-white delicate hand to the tobacconist, who took a peculiar pleasure in shaking it cordially. A subsequent rencontre in a stage coach, where they enjoyed a delightful *tête-à-tête* together for some miles (*procul, ô procul esto profani*), told with a still deeper effect; and everything seemed in a fair way of being amicably adjusted.

Miss Jenny, undismayed by these not unmarked symptoms of ripening intimacy, determined to pursue her own line of amatory politics, and set her whole enginery of attack in readiness for operation. She had always considered the shop at the cross as the surest path for her to the temple of Bona Fortuna. Thence driven, she was lost in hopeless mazes, and knew not where to turn.

She flaunted about, and flashed her finery in the optical observers of Daniel, as if to say, This is a specimen,—*ex uno disce omnes*,—thousands lie under this sample. Hope and fear swayed her heart by turns, though the former passion was uppermost; yet she saw a snake, in the form of Mrs Bouncer, lurking in her way; and she took every lawful means, or such as an inamorata considers such, to scotch it.

Well might Daniel be surprised at the quantity of candles made use of in Miss Jenny's establishment. It puzzled his utmost calculation; for though the whole house had been illuminated from top to bottom, and fours to the pound had been lighted at both ends, no such quantity could be consumed. But there she was, week after week, with her young vassal with the yellow neck behind her, swinging a large wicker-basket over his arm, in which were deposited, layer above layer, the various produce of Miss Jenny's marketing.

On Daniel, on these occasions, she showered her complaisance with the liberality of March rains; inquiring anxiously after his health; cautioning him to wear flannel, and beware of the rheumatics; telling him her private news, and admiring the elegance of his articles, while all the time her shrivelled features "grinned horrible a ghastly smile," which only quadrupled the "fold upon fold innumerable" of her wrinkles, and displayed gums innocent of teeth,—generosity not being able to elevate three rusty stumps to that honour and dignity.

There was a strong conflict in Daniel's mind, and the poor man was completely "bamboozled." Ought he to let nature have its sway for once, take to his arms the blushing and beautiful widow, and trust to the success of his efforts for future aggrandisement? Or must strong habit still domineer over him, and Miss Jenny's hook, baited with twenty thousand pounds, draw him to the shores of wedlock, "a willing captive?" Must he leave behind him sons and daughters with small portions, and "the world before them, where to choose;" or none—and his name die away among the things of the past, while cousins ten times removed alike

in blood and regard, riot on his substance? The question was complicated, and different interrogatories put to the oracle of his mind afforded different responses. The affair was one, in every respect, so nicely balanced, that "he wist not what to do." Fortune long hung equal in the balance, and might have done so much longer, had not an unforeseen accident made the scale of the widow precipitately mount aloft, and kick the beam.

It was about ten o'clock on the night of a blustering November day, that a tall, red-haired, moustachioed, and raw-boned personage, wrapt up in a military great-coat, alighted from the top of the *Telegraph* at the Salutation Inn, and delivered his portmanteau into the assiduous hands of Bill the waiter. He was ushered into a comfortable room, whose flickering blazing fire mocked the cacophony of his puckered features, and induced him hastily to doff his envelopments, and draw in an arm-chair to the borders of the hearthrug.

Having discussed a smoking and substantial supper, he asked Bill, who was in the act of supplying his rummer with hot water, if a Mrs Bouncer, an officer's widow, resided in the neighbourhood.

"Yes," replied Bill, "I know her well; she lives at third house round the corner, on the second floor, turning to the door on your right hand."

"She is quite well, I hope?" asked the son of Mars.

"Oh! quite well, bless you; and about to take a second husband. I hear they are to be proclaimed next week. She is making a good bargain."

"Next week to be married!" ejaculated the gallant captain, turning up his eyes, and starting to his legs with a hurried perplexity.

"So I believe, sir," continued Bill very calmly. "If you have come to the ceremony, you will find that it does not take place till then. Depend upon it, sir, you have mistaken the date of your invitation card."

"Well, waiter, you may leave me," said the captain, stroking his chin in evident embarrassment; "but stop, who is she about to get?"

"Oh, I thought everybody knew Mr Daniel Cathie, one of the town-council, sir; a tobacconist, and a respectable man; likely soon to come to the provostry, sir. He is rather up in years to be sure; but he is as rich as a Jew."

"What do you say is his name?"

"Daniel Cathie, Esq., tobacconist, and a candlemaker near the Cross. That is his name and designation,—a very respectable man, sir."

"Well, order the girl to have my bed well warmed, and to put pens, ink, and paper into the room. In the meantime, bring me the boot-jack."

The captain kept his fiery feelings in restraint before Bill; but the intelligence hit him like a cannon-shot. He retired almost immediately to his bedchamber; but a guest in the adjoining room declared in the morning, that he had never been allowed to close his eyes, from some person's alternately snoring or speaking in his sleep, as if in violent altercation with some one; and that, whenever these sounds died away, they were only exchanged for the irregular tread of a foot measuring the apartment, seemingly in every direction.

It was nine in the morning; and Daniel, as he was ringing a shilling on the counter, which he had just taken for "value received," and half ejaculating aloud as he peered at it through his spectacles—"Not a Birmingham, I hope"—had a card put into his hand by Jonas Bunting, the Salutation shoeblack.

Having broken the seal, Daniel read to himself,—"A gentleman wishes to see Mr Cathie at the Salutation Inn, on particular business, as speedily as possible. Inquire for the gentleman in No. 7.—A quarter before nine, A.M."

"Some of these dunning travellers!" exclaimed Daniel to himself. "They are continually pestering me for orders. If I had the lighting up of the moon, I could not satisfy them all. I have a good mind not to go, for this fellow not sending his name. It is impudence with a vengeance, and a new way of requesting favours!" As he was muttering these thoughts between his teeth, however, he was proceeding in the almost unconscious act of undoing his apron, which having flung aside, he adjusted his hair before the glass, carefully pressed his hat into shape, and drew it down on his temples with both hands; after which, with hasty steps, he vanished from behind the counter.

Arriving at the inn, he was ushered into No. 7 by the officious Bill, who handed his name before him, and closed the door after him.

"This is an unpleasant business, Mr Cathie," said the swaggering captain, drawing himself up to his full length, and putting on a look of important ferocity. "It is needless to waste words on the subject: there is a brace of pistols, both are loaded,—take one, and I take the other; choose either, sir. The room is fully eight paces," added he, striding across in a hurried manner, and clanking his iron heels on the carpet.

"It would, I think, be but civil," said Daniel, evidently in considerable mental as well as bodily agitation, "to inform me what are your intentions, before forcing me to commit murder. Probably you have mistaken me for some other; if not, please let me know in what you conceive I have offended you!"

"By the powers!" said Captain Thwackeray with great vehemence, "you have injured me materially,—nay, mortally,—and either your life, sir, or my own, sir, shall be sacrificed to the adjustment."

While saying this, the captain took up first the one pistol, and then the other, beating down the contents with the ramrod, and measuring with his finger the comparative depth to which each was loaded.

"A pretty story, certainly, to injure a gentleman in the tenderest part, and then to beg a recital of the particulars. Have you no regard for my feelings, sir?"

"Believe me, sir, on the word of an honest man, that as to your meaning in this business, I am in utter darkness," said Daniel with cool firmness.

"To be plain, then,—to be explicit,—to come to the point, sir,—are you not on the eve of marrying Mrs Bouncer?"

"Mrs Bouncer!" echoed the tallow-chandler, starting back, and crimsoning. Immediately, however, commanding himself, he continued:—"As to the truth of the case, that is another matter; but were it as you represent it, I was unaware that I could be injuring any one in so doing."

"Now, sir, we have come to the point; *rem tetigisti acu;* and you speak out plainly. Take your pistol," bravoed the captain.

"No, no,—not so fast;—perhaps we may understand each other without being driven to that alternative."

"Well then, sir, abjure her this moment, and resign her to me, or one of our lives must be sacrificed."

While he was saying this, Daniel laid his hands on one of the pistols, and appeared as if examining it; which motion the captain instantly took for a signal of acquiescence, and "changed his hand, and checked his pride."

"I hope," continued he, evidently much softened, "that there shall be no need of resorting to desperate measures. In a word, the affair is this:—I have a written promise from Mrs Bouncer, that, if ever she married a second time, her hand was mine. It matters not with the legality of the measure, though the

proceeding took place in the lifetime of her late husband, my friend, Captain Bouncer. It is quite an affair of honour. I assure you, sir, she has vowed to accept of none but me, Captain Thwackeray, as his successor. If you have paid your addresses to her in ignorance of this, I forgive you; if not, we stand opposed as before."

"Oh ho! if that be the way the land lies," replied Daniel, with a shrill whistle, "she is yours, captain, for me, and heartily welcome. I resign her unconditionally, as you military gentlemen phrase it. A great deal of trouble is spared by one's speaking out. If you had told me this, there would have been no reason for loading the pistols. May I now wish you a good morning! 'Od save us! but these are fearful weapons on the table! Good morning, sir."

"Bless your heart, no," said Captain Thwackeray, evidently much relieved from his distressing situation. "Oh no, sir; not before we breakfast together;" and, so saying, before Daniel had a moment's time for reply, he pulled the bell violently.

"Bill, bring in breakfast for two, as expeditiously as possible—(*Exit Bill*). I knew that no man of honour, such as I know or believe you to be (your appearance bespeaks it), would act such a selfish part as deprive me of my legal right; and I trust that this transaction shall not prevent friendly intercourse between us, if I come, as my present intention is, to take up my abode among you in this town."

"By no means," said Daniel; "Mrs Bouncer is yours for me; and as to matrimonials, I am otherwise provided. There are no grounds for contention, captain."

Breakfast was discussed with admirable appetite by both. The contents of the pistols were drawn, the powder carefully returned into the flask, the two bullets into the waistcoat pocket, and the instruments of destruction themselves deposited in a green woollen case. After cordially shaking each other by the hand, the captain saw Mr Daniel to the door, and made a very low *congé*, besides kissing his hand at parting.

The captain we leave to fight his own battles, and return to our hero, whose stoicism, notwithstanding its firmness, did not prevent him from feeling considerably on the occasion. Towards Mrs Bouncer he had not a Romeo-enthusiasm, but certainly a stronger attachment than he had ever experienced for any other of her sex. Though the case was hopeless, he did not allow himself to pine away with "a green and yellow melancholy," but reconciled himself to his fate with the more facility, as the transaction between Thwackeray and her was said to have taken place during the lifetime of her late husband, which considerably lessened her in his estimation; having been educated a rigid Presbyterian, and holding in great abhorrence all such illustrations of military morality. "No, no," thought he; "my loss is more apparent than real: the woman who was capable of doing such a thing, would not content herself with stopping even there. Miss Jenny Drybones is the woman for *me*—I am the man for *her* money." And here a thousand selfish notions crowded on his heart, and confirmed him in his determination, which he set about without delay.

There was little need of delicacy in the matter; and Daniel went to work quite in a business-like style. He commenced operations on the offensive, offered Miss Jenny his arm, squeezed her hand, buttered her with love-phrases, ogled her out of countenance, and haunted her like a ghost. Refusal was in vain; and after a faint, a feeble, and sham show of resistance, the damsel drew down her flag of defiance, and submitted to honourable terms of capitulation.

Ten days after Miss Jenny's surrender, their names were proclaimed in church; and as the people stared at each other in half wonder and half good-humour, the precentor continued, after a slight pause, "There is also a purpose of marriage between Mrs Martha Bouncer, at present residing in the parish, and Augustus Thwackeray, Esq., captain of the Bengal Rangers; whoever can produce any lawful objections against the same, he is requested to do so, time and place convenient."

Every forenoon and evening between that and the marriage-day, Daniel and his intended enjoyed a delightful *tête-à-tête* in the lady's garden, walking arm-in-arm, and talking, doubtless, of home-concerns and Elysian prospects that awaited them. The pair would have formed a fit subject for the pencil of a Hogarth,—about "to become one flesh," and so different in appearance. The lady, long-visaged and wrinkled, stiff-backed and awkward, long as a may-pole; the bridegroom, jolly-faced like Bacchus, stumpy like an alder-tree, and round as a beer-barrel.

Ere Friday had beheld its meridian sunshine, two carriages, drawn up at the door, the drivers with white favours and Limerick gloves, told the attentive world that Dr Redbeak had made them one flesh. Shortly after the ceremony, the happy couple drove away amid the cheering of an immense crowd of neighbours, who had planted themselves round the door to make observations on what was going on. Another coincidence worthy of remark also occurred on this auspicious day. At the same hour, had the fair widow Martha yielded up her lily-white hand to the whiskered, ferocious-looking, but gallant Captain Thwackeray; and the carriages containing the respective marriage-parties passed one another in the street at a good round pace. The postilions, with their large flaunting ribbon-knots, huzza'd in meeting, brandishing their whips in the air, as if betokening individual victory. The captain looking out, saw Miss Jenny, in maiden pride, sitting stately beside her chosen tobacconist; and Daniel, glancing to the left, beheld Mrs Martha blushing by the side of her moustachioed warrior. Both waved their hands in passing, and pursued their destinies.—*Janus; or, the Edinburgh Literary Almanac.*

THE HAUNTED SHIPS.

By Allan Cunningham.

Though my mind's not
Hoodwinked with rustic marvels, I do think
There are more things in the grove, the air, the flood,
Yea, and the charnelled earth, than what wise man,
Who walks so proud as if his form alone
Filled the wide temple of the universe,
Will let a frail mind say. I'd write i' the creed
O' the sagest head alive, that fearful forms,
Holy or reprobate, do page men's heels;
That shapes, too horrid for our gaze, stand o'er
The murderer's dust, and for revenge glare up,
Even till the stars weep fire for very pity.

Chapter I.

Along the sea of Solway—romantic on the Scottish side, with its woodlands, its bays, its cliffs, and headlands; and interesting on the English side, with its many beautiful towns with their shadows on the water, rich pas-

tures, safe harbours, and numerous ships—there still linger many traditional stories of a maritime nature, most of them connected with superstitions singularly wild and unusual. To the curious, these tales afford a rich fund of entertainment, from the many diversities of the same story; some dry and barren, and stripped of all the embellishments of poetry; others dressed out in all the riches of a superstitious belief and haunted imagination. In this they resemble the inland traditions of the peasants; but many of the oral treasures of the Galwegian or the Cumbrian coast have the stamp of the Dane and the Norseman upon them, and claim but a remote or faint affinity with the legitimate legends of Caledonia. Something like a rude prosaic outline of several of the most noted of the northern ballads—the adventures and depredations of the old ocean kings—still lend life to the evening tale; and, among others, the story of the Haunted Ships is still popular among the maritime peasantry.

One fine harvest evening I went on board the shallop of Richard Faulder, of Allanbay, and committing ourselves to the waters, we allowed a gentle wind from the east to waft us at its pleasure towards the Scottish coast. We passed the sharp promontory of Siddick, and skirting the land within a stone-cast, glided along the shore till we came within sight of the ruined Abbey of Sweetheart. The green mountain of Criffell ascended beside us; and the bleat of the flocks from its summit, together with the winding of the evening horn of the reapers, came softened into something like music over land and sea. We pushed our shallop into a deep and wooded bay, and sat silently looking on the serene beauty of the place. The moon glimmered in her rising through the tall shafts of the pines of Caerlaverock; and the sky, with scarce a cloud, showered down on wood, and headland, and bay, the twinkling beams of a thousand stars, rendering every object visible. The tide, too, was coming with that swift and silent swell observable when the wind is gentle; the woody curves along the land were filling with the flood, till it touched the green branches of the drooping trees; while in the centre current the roll and the plunge of a thousand pellecks told to the experienced fisherman that salmon were abundant.

As we looked, we saw an old man emerging from a path that winded to the shore through a grove of doddered hazel; he carried a halve-net on his back, while behind him came a girl bearing a small harpoon, with which the fishers are remarkably dexterous in striking their prey. The senior seated himself on a large gray stone, which overlooked the bay, laid aside his bonnet, and submitted his bosom and neck to the refreshing sea breeze; and taking his harpoon from his attendant, sat with the gravity and composure of a spirit of the flood, with his ministering nymph behind him. We pushed our shallop to the shore, and soon stood at their side.

"This is old Mark Macmoran, the mariner, with his granddaughter Barbara," said Richard Faulder, in a whisper that had something of fear in it; "he knows every creek, and cavern, and quicksand in Solway,—has seen the Spectre Hound that haunts the Isle of Man; has heard him bark, and at every bark has seen a ship sink; and he has seen, too, the Haunted Ships in full sail; and, if all tales be true, has sailed in them himself;—he's an awful person."

Though I perceived in the communication of my friend something of the superstition of the sailor, I could not help thinking that common rumour had made a happy choice in singling out old Mark to maintain her intercourse

with the invisible world. His hair, which seemed to have refused all acquaintance with the comb, hung matted upon his shoulders; a kind of mantle, or rather blanket, pinned with a wooden skewer round his neck, fell mid-leg down, concealing all his nether garments as far as a pair of hose, darned with yarn of all conceivable colours, and a pair of shoes, patched and repaired till nothing of the original structure remained, and clasped on his feet with two massive silver buckles.

If the dress of the old man was rude and sordid, that of his granddaughter was gay, and even rich.

She wore a boddice of fine wool, wrought round the bosom with alternate leaf and lily, and a kirtle of the same fabric, which almost touching her white and delicate ankle, showed her snowy feet, so fairy-light and round that they scarcely seemed to touch the grass where she stood. Her hair—a natural ornament which woman seeks much to improve—was of a bright glossy brown, and encumbered rather than adorned with a snood, set thick with marine productions, among which the small clear pearl found in the Solway was conspicuous. Nature had not trusted to a handsome shape, and a sylph-like air, for young Barbara's influence over the heart of man; but had bestowed a pair of large bright blue eyes, swimming in liquid light, so full of love, and gentleness, and joy, that all the sailors, from Annanwater to far St Bees, acknowledged their power, and sung songs about the bonnie lass of Mark Macmoran. She stood holding a small gaff-hook of polished steel in her hand, and seemed not dissatisfied with the glances I bestowed on her from time to time, and which I held more than requited by a single glance of those eyes which retained so many capricious hearts in subjection.

The tide, though rapidly augmenting, had not yet filled the bay at our feet. The moon now streamed fairly over the tops of Caerlaverock pines, and showed the expanse of ocean dimpling and swelling, on which sloops and shallops came dancing, and displaying at every turn their extent of white sail against the beam of the moon. I looked on old Mark the Mariner, who, seated motionless on his gray stone, kept his eye fixed on the increasing waters with a look of seriousness and sorrow in which I saw little of the calculating spirit of a mere fisherman. Though he looked on the coming tide, his eyes seemed to dwell particularly on the black and decayed hulls of two vessels, which, half immersed in the quicksand, still addressed to every heart a tale of shipwreck and desolation. The tide wheeled and foamed around them; and creeping inch by inch up the side, at last fairly threw its waters over the top, and a long and hollow eddy showed the resistance which the liquid element received.

The moment they were fairly buried in the water, the old man clasped his hands together, and said—

"Blessed be the tide that will break over and bury ye for ever! Sad to mariners, and sorrowful to maids and mothers, has the time been you have choked up this deep and bonnie bay. For evil were you sent, and for evil have you continued. Every season finds from you its song of sorrow and wail, its funeral processions, and its shrouded corses. Woe to the land where the wood grew that made ye? Cursed be the axe that hewed ye on the mountains, the bands that joined ye together, the bay that ye first swam in, and the wind that wafted ye here! Seven times have ye put my life in peril; three fair sons have ye swept from my side, and two bonnie grandbairns; and now, even now, your waters foam and flash for my destruction, did I venture my frail limbs in quest of food in your deadly bay. I see by that ripple and that foam, and

hear by the sound and singing of your surge, that ye yearn for another victim, but it shall not be me or mine."

Even as the old mariner addressed himself to the wrecked ships, a young man appeared at the southern extremity of the bay, holding his halve-net in his hand, and hastening into the current. Mark rose, and shouted, and waved him back from a place which, to a person unacquainted with the dangers of the bay, real and superstitious, seemed sufficiently perilous: his granddaughter, too, added her voice to his, and waved her white hands; but the more they strove the faster advanced the peasant, till he stood to his middle in the water, while the tide increased every moment in depth and strength. "Andrew, Andrew!" cried the young woman, in a voice quavering with emotion, "turn, turn, I tell you. O the ships, the haunted ships!" But the appearance of a fine run of fish had more influence with the peasant than the voice of bonnie Barbara, and forward he dashed, net in hand. In a moment he was borne off his feet, and mingled like foam with the water, and hurried towards the fatal eddies which whirled and reared round the sunken ships. But he was a powerful young man, and an expert swimmer: he seized on one of the projecting ribs of the nearest hulk, and clinging to it with the grasp of despair, uttered yell after yell, sustaining himself against the prodigious rush of the current.

From a sheiling of turf and straw within the pitch of a bar from the spot where we stood, came out an old woman bent with age, and leaning on a crutch. "I heard the voice of that lad Andrew Lammie; can the chield be drowning, that he skirls sae uncannily?" said the old woman, seating herself on the ground and looking earnestly at the water. "Ou ay," she continued, "he's doomed, he's doomed; heart and hand never can save him; boats, ropes, and man's strength and wit, all vain! vain! he's doomed, he's doomed!"

By this time I had thrown myself into the shallop, followed reluctantly by Richard Faulder, over whose courage and kindness of heart superstition had great power; and with one push from the shore, and some exertion in sculling, we came within a quoit-cast of the unfortunate fisherman. He stayed not to profit by our aid; for when he perceived us near, he uttered a piercing shriek of joy, and bounded toward us through the agitated element the full length of an oar. I saw him for a second on the surface of the water; but the eddying current sucked him down; and all I ever beheld of him again was his hand held above the flood, and clutching in agony at some imaginary aid. I sat gazing in horror on the vacant sea before us; but a breathing-time before, a human being, full of youth, and strength, and hope, was there: his cries were still ringing in my ears, and echoing in the woods; and now nothing was seen or heard save the turbulent expanse of water, and the sound of its chafing on the shores. We pushed back our shallop, and resumed our station on the cliff beside the old mariner and his descendant.

"Wherefore sought ye to peril your own lives fruitlessly," said Mark, "in attempting to save the doomed? Whoso touches these infernal ships never survives to tell the tale. Woe to the man who is found nigh them at midnight when the tide has subsided, and they arise in their former beauty, with forecastle, and deck, and sail, and pennon, and shroud! Then is seen the streaming of lights along the water from their cabin windows, and then is heard the sound of mirth and the clamour of tongues and the infernal whoop and halloo, and song, ringing far and wide. Woe to the man who comes nigh them!"

To all this my companion listened with a breathless attention. I felt something touched with a superstition to

which I partly believed I had seen one victim offered up; and I inquired of the old mariner—

"How and when came these haunted ships there? To me they seem but the melancholy relics of some unhappy voyagers, and much more likely to warn people to shun destruction, than entice and delude them to it."

"And so," said the old man with a smile, which had more of sorrow in it than of mirth; "and so, young man, these black and shattered hulks seem to the eye of the multitude. But things are not what they seem: that water, a kind and convenient servant to the wants of man, which seems so smooth, and so dimpling, and so gentle, has swallowed up a human soul even now; and the place which it covers, so fair and so level, is a faithless quicksand out of which none escape. Things are otherwise than they seem. Had you lived as long as I have had the sorrow to live; had you seen the storms, and braved the perils, and endured the distresses which have befallen me; had you sat gazing out on the dreary ocean at midnight on a haunted coast; had you seen comrade after comrade, brother after brother, and son after son, swept away by the merciless ocean from your very side; had you seen the shapes of friends, doomed to the wave and the quicksand, appearing to you in the dreams and visions of the night; then would your mind have been prepared for crediting the strange legends of mariners; and the two haunted Danish ships would have had their terrors for you, as they have for all who sojourn on this coast.

"Of the time and cause of their destruction," continued the old man, "I know nothing certain; they have stood as you have seen them for uncounted time; and while all other ships wrecked on this unhappy coast have gone to pieces, and rotted, and sunk away in a few years, these two haunted hulks have neither sunk in the quicksand, nor has a single spar or board been displaced. Maritime legend says, that two ships of Denmark having had permission, for a time, to work deeds of darkness and dolour on the deep, were at last condemned to the whirlpool and the sunken rock, and were wrecked in this bonnie bay, as a sign to seamen to be gentle and devout. The night when they were lost was a harvest evening of uncommon mildness and beauty: the sun had newly set; the moon came brighter and brighter out; and the reapers, laying their sickles at the root of the standing corn, stood on rock and bank, looking at the increasing magnitude of the waters, for sea and land were visible from St Bees to Barnhourie.

"The sails of the two vessels were soon seen bent for the Scottish coast; and with a speed outrunning the swiftest ship, they approached the dangerous quicksands and headland of Borranpoint. On the deck of the foremost ship not a living soul was seen, or shape, unless something in darkness and form resembling a human shadow could be called a shape, which flitted from extremity to extremity of the ship, with the appearance of trimming the sails, and directing the vessel's course. But the decks of its companion were crowded with human shapes; the captain, and mate, and sailor, and cabin boy, all seemed there; and from them the sound of mirth and minstrelsy echoed over land and water. The coast which they skirted along was one of extreme danger; and the reapers shouted to warn them to beware of sandbank and rock; but of this friendly counsel no notice was taken, except that a large and famished dog, which sat on the prow, answered every shout with a long, loud, and melancholy howl. The deep sandbank of Carsethorn was expected to arrest the career of these desperate navigators; but they passed, with the celerity of waterfowl, over an obstruction which had wrecked many pretty ships.

"Old men shook their heads, and departed, saying, 'We have seen the fiend sailing in a bottomless ship; let us go home and pray:' but one young and wilful man said, 'Fiend! I'll warrant it's nae fiend, but douce Janet Withershins, the witch, holding a carouse with some of her Cumberland cummers, and mickle red wine will be spilt atween them. 'Od, I would gladly have a toothfu'! I'll warrant it's nane o' your cauld sour slae-water, like a bottle of Bailie Skrinkie's port, but right drap-o'-my-heart's-blood stuff, that would waken a body out of their last linen. I wonder whaur the cummers will anchor their craft?'

"'And I'll vow,' said another rustic, 'the wine they quaff is none of your visionary drink, such as a drouthy body has dished out to his lips in a dream; nor is it shadowy and unsubstantial, like the vessels they sail in, which are made out of a cockle-shell, or a cast-off slipper, or the paring of a seaman's right thumb-nail. I once got a handsel out of a witch's quaigh myself;—auld Marion Mathers of Dustiefoot, whom they tried to bury in the old kirkyard of Dunscore; but the cummer raise as fast as they laid her down, and naewhere else would she lie but in the bonnie green kirkyard of Kier, among douce and sponsible folk. So I'll vow that the wine of a witch's cup is as fell liquor as ever did a kindly turn to a poor man's heart; and be they fiends, or be they witches, if they have red wine asteer, I'll risk a droukit sark for ae glorious tout on't.'

"'Silence, ye sinners,' said the minister's son of a neighbouring parish, who united in his own person his father's lack of devotion with his mother's love of liquor. 'Whisht! Speak as if ye had the fear of something holy before ye. Let the vessels run their own way to destruction: who can stay the eastern wind, and the current of the Solway sea? I can find ye Scripture warrant for that: so let them try their strength on Blawhooly rocks, and their might on the broad quicksand. There's a surf running there would knock the ribs together of a galley built by the imps of the pit, and commanded by the Prince of Darkness. Bonnily and bravely they sail away there; but before the blast blows by they'll be wrecked; and red wine and strong brandy will be as rife as dykewater, and we'll drink the health of bonnie Bell Blackness out of her left foot slipper.'

"The speech of the young profligate was applauded by several of his companions, and away they flew to the bay of Blawhooly, from whence they never returned. The two vessels were observed all at once to stop in the bosom of the bay, on the spot where their hulls now appear: the mirth and the minstrelsy waxed louder than ever; and the forms of the maidens, with instruments of music and wine-cups in their hands, thronged the decks. A boat was lowered; and the same shadowy pilot who conducted the ships made it start towards the shore with the rapidity of lightning, and its head knocked against the bank where the four young men stood, who longed for the unblest drink. They leaped in with a laugh, and with a laugh were they welcomed on deck; wine cups were given to each, and as they raised them to their lips the vessels melted away beneath their feet; and one loud shriek, mingled with laughter still louder, was heard over land and water for many miles. Nothing more was heard or seen till the morning, when the crowd who came to the beach saw with fear and wonder the two Haunted Ships, such as they now seem, masts and tackle gone; nor mark, nor sign, by which their name, country, or destination, could be known, was left remaining. Such is the tradition of the mariners."

Chapter II.

"And trow ye," said the old woman, who, attracted from her hut by the drowning cries of the young fisherman, had remained an auditor of the mariner's legend; "and trow ye, Mark Macmoran, that the tale of the Haunted Ships is done? I can say no to that. Mickle have my ears heard, but more mine eyes have witnessed since I came to dwell in this humble home by the side of the deep sea. I mind the night weel: it was on Hallow-e'en, the nuts were cracked, and the apples were eaten, and spell and charm were tried at my fireside; till, wearied with diving into the dark waves of futurity, the lads and lasses fairly took to the more visible blessings of kind words, tender clasps, and gentle courtship.

"Soft words in a maiden's ear, and a kindly kiss o' her lip, were old world matters to me, Mark Macmoran; though I mean not to say that I have been free of the folly of daundering and daffin' with a youth in my day, and keeping tryst with him in dark and lonely places. However, as I say, these times of enjoyment were past and gone with me; the mair's the pity that pleasure should flee sae fast away,—and as I couldna make sport I thought I would not mar any; so out I sauntered into the fresh cold air, and sat down behind that old oak, and looked abroad on the wide sea. I had my ain sad thoughts, ye may think, at the time; it was in that very bay my blythe gudeman perished, with seven more in his company; and on that very bank where ye see the waves leaping and foaming, I saw seven stately corses streeked, but the dearest was the eighth. It was a woful sight to me, a widow, with four bonnie boys, with nought to support them but these twa hands, and God's blessing, and a cow's grass. I have never liked to live out of sight of this bay since that time; and mony's the moonlight night I sit looking on these watery mountains, and these waste shores; it does my heart good, whatever it may do to my head. So ye see it was Hallow-e'en; and looking on sea and land sat I; and my heart wandering to other thoughts soon made me forget my youthful company at hame. It might be near the howe hour of the night; the tide was making, and its singing brought strange old-world stories with it; and I thought on the dangers that sailors endure, the fates they meet with, and the fearful forms they see. My own blithe gudeman had seen sights that made him grave enough at times, though he aye tried to laugh them away.

"Aweel, between that very rock aneath us and the coming tide, I saw, or thought I saw (for the tale is so dream-like that the whole might pass for a vision of the night) the form of a man. His plaid was gray; his face was gray; and his hair, which hung low down till it nearly came to the middle of his back, was as white as the white sea-foam. He began to houk and dig under the bank; and God be near me! thought I, this maun be the unblessed spirit of auld Adam Gowdgowpin, the miser, who is doomed to dig for shipwrecked treasure, and count how many millions are hidden for ever from man's enjoyment. The form found something which in shape and hue seemed a left-foot slipper of brass; so down to the tide he marched, and placing it on the water, whirled it thrice round; and the infernal slipper dilated at every turn, till it became a bonnie barge with its sails bent, and on board leaped the form, and scudded swiftly away. He came to one of the haunted ships; and striking it with his oar, a fair ship, with mast and canvas, and mariners, started up: he touched the other haunted ship,

and produced the like transformation; and away the three spectre ships bounded, leaving a track of fire behind them on the billows, which was long unextinguished.

"Now wasna that a bonnie and a fearful sight to see beneath the light of the Hallowmas moon? But the tale is far frae finished; for mariners say that once a year, on a certain night, if ye stand on the Borranpoint, ye will see the infernal shallops coming snoring through the Solway; ye will hear the same laugh, and song, and mirth, and minstrelsy, which our ancestors heard; see them bound over the sandbanks and sunken rocks like sea-gulls, cast their anchor in Blawhooly Bay, while the shadowy figures lower down the boat, and augment their numbers with the four unhappy mortals to whose memory a stone stands in the kirkyard, with a sinking ship and a shoreless sea cut upon it. Then the spectre-ships vanish, and the drowning shriek of mortals and the rejoicing laugh of fiends are heard, and the old hulls are left as a memorial that the old spiritual kingdom has not departed from the earth. But I maun away and trim my little cottage fire, and make it burn and blaze up bonnie, to warm the crickets, and my cauld and crazy bones, that maun soon be laid aneath the green sod in the eerie kirkyard."

And away the old dame tottered to her cottage, secured the door on the inside, and soon the hearth-flame was seen to glimmer and gleam through the key-hole and the window.

"I'll tell ye what," said the old mariner, in a subdued tone, and with a shrewd and suspicious glance of his eye after the old sibyl, "it's a word that may not very well be uttered, but there are many mistakes made in evening stories if old Moll Moray there, where she lives, knows not mickle more than she is willing to tell of the Haunted Ships, and their unhallowed mariners. She lives cannily and quietly; no one knows how she is fed or supported; but her dress is aye whole, her cottage ever smokes, and her table lacks neither of wine, white and red, nor of fowl and fish, and white bread and brown. It was a dear scoff to Jock Matheson, when he called old Moll the uncannie carline of Blawhooly: his boat ran round and round in the centre of the Solway—everybody said it was enchanted—and down it went head foremost; and hadna Jock been a swimmer equal to a sheldrake, he would have fed the fish; but I warrant it sobered the lad's speech, and he never reckoned himself safe till he made auld Moll the present of a new kirtle and a stone of cheese."

"O father," said his granddaughter Barbara, "ye surely wrong poor old Mary Moray: what use could it be to an old woman like her, who has no wrongs to redress, no malice to work out against mankind, and nothing to seek of enjoyment save a cannie hour and a quiet grave—what use could the fellowship of the fiends, and the communion of evil spirits, be to her? I know Jenny Primrose puts rowan-tree above the doorhead when she sees old Mary coming; I know the goodwife of Kittlenacket wears rowan-berry leaves in the head-band of her blue kirtle, and all for the sake of averting the unsonsie glance of Mary's right ee; and I know that the auld laird of Burntroutwater drives his seven cows to their pasture with a wand of witchtree, to keep Mary from milking them. But what has all that to do with haunted shallops, visionary mariners, and bottomless boats? I have heard myself as pleasant a tale about the Haunted Ships and their unworldly crews as any one would wish to hear in a winter evening. It was told me by young Benjie Macharg, one summer night, sitting on Arbigland-bank; the lad intended a sort of love-meeting, but all that he could talk of

was about smearing sheep and shearing sheep, and of the wife which the Norway elves of the Haunted Ships made for his uncle Sandie Macharg. And I shall tell ye the tale as the honest lad told it to me.

"Alexander Macharg, besides being the laird of three acres of peat-moss, two kail gardens, and the owner of seven good milch cows, a pair of horses, and six pet sheep, was the husband of one of the handsomest women in seven parishes. Many a lad sighed the day he was brided; and a Nithsdale laird and two Annandale moorland farmers drank themselves to their last linen, as well as their last shilling, through sorrow for her loss. But married was the dame; and home she was carried, to bear rule over her home and her husband, as an honest woman should. Now ye maun ken that though flesh-and-blood lovers of Alexander's bonnie wife all ceased to love and to sue her after she became another's, there were certain admirers who did not consider their claim at all abated, or their hopes lessened, by the kirk's famous obstacle of matrimony.

"Ye have heard how the devout minister of Tinwald had a fair son carried away, and bedded against his liking to an unchristened bride, whom the elves and the fairies provided: ye have heard how the bonnie bride of the drunken laird of Soukitup was stolen by the fairies out at the back window of the bridal chamber the time the bridegroom was groping his way to the chamber door; and ye have heard—but why need I multiply cases? Such things in the ancient days were as common as candlelight. So ye'll no hinder certain water-elves and sea-fairies, who sometimes keep festival and summer mirth in these old haunted hulks, from falling in love with the weel-faured wife of Laird Macharg; and to their plots and contrivances they went, how they might accomplish to sunder man and wife; and sundering such a man and such a wife was like sundering the green leaf from the summer, or the fragrance from the flower.

"So it fell on a time that Laird Macharg took his halve-net on his back, and his steel spear in his hand, and down to Blawhooly Bay gaed he, and into the water he went right between the two haunted hulks, and placing his net awaited the coming of the tide. The night, ye maun ken, was mirk, and the wind lown, and the singing of the increasing waters among the shells and the pebbles was heard for sundry miles. All at once lights began to glance and twinkle on board the two Haunted Ships from every hole and seam, and presently the sound as of a hatchet employed in squaring timber echoed far and wide. But if the toil of these unearthly workmen amazed the laird, how much more was his amazement increased when a sharp shrill voice called out, 'Ho! brother, what are you doing now?' A voice still shriller responded from the other haunted ship, 'I'm making a wife to Sandie Macharg.' And a loud quavering laugh running from ship to ship, and from bank to bank, told the joy they expected from their labour.

"Now the laird, besides being a devout and a God-fearing man, was shrewd and bold; and in plot and contrivance, and skill in conducting his designs, was fairly an overmatch for any dozen land elves. But the water elves are far more subtle; besides, their haunts and their dwellings being in the great deep, pursuit and detection are hopeless, if they succeed in carrying their prey to the waves. But ye shall hear.

"Home flew the laird, collected his family around the hearth, spoke of the signs and the sins of the times, and talked of mortification and prayer for averting calamity; and finally, taking from the shelf his father's Bible, brass

clasps, black print, and covered with calf-skin, he proceeded, without let or stint, to perform domestic worship. I should have told ye that he bolted and locked the door, shut up all inlet to the house, threw salt into the fire, and proceeded in every way like a man skilful in guarding against the plots of fairies and fiends. His wife looked on all this with wonder; but she saw something in her husband's looks that hindered her from intruding either question or advice, and a wise woman was she.

"Near the mid-hour of the night the rush of a horse's feet was heard, and the sound of a rider leaping from his back, and a heavy knock came to the door, accompanied by a voice, saying, 'The cummer's drink's hot, and the knave bairn is expected at Laird Laurie's to-night; sae mount, gudewife, and come.'

"'Preserve me!' said the wife of Sandie Macharg, 'that's news indeed! who could have thought it? The laird has been heirless for seventeen years. Now, Sandie, my man, fetch me my skirt and hood.'

"But he laid his arm round his wife's neck and said—

"'If all the lairds in Galloway go heirless, over this door threshold shall you not stir to-night; and I have said it, and I have sworn it: seek not to know why and wherefore,—but, Lord, send us Thy blessed moonlight!'

The wife looked for a moment in her husband's eyes, and desisted from further entreaty.

"'But let us send a civil message to the gossips, Sandie; and hadna ye better say I'm sair laid wi' a sudden sickness? —though it's sinful-like to send the poor messenger a mile agate with a lie in his mouth without a glass of brandy.'

"'To such a messenger, and to those who sent him, no apology is needed,' said the austere laird, 'so let him depart.'

"And the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard, and the muttered imprecations of its rider on the churlish treatment he had experienced.

"'Now, Sandie, my lad,' said his wife, laying an arm particularly white and round about his neck as she spoke, 'are you not a queer man and a stern? I have been your wedded wife now these three years, and, beside my dower, have brought you three as bonnie bairns as ever smiled aneath a summer sun. O man! you a douce man, and fitter to be an elder than even Willie Greer himsel,—I have the minister's ain word for't,—to put on these hard-hearted looks, and gang waving your arms that way, as if ye said, "I winna tak' the counsel o' sic a hempie as you." I'm your ain leal wife, and will and maun hae an explanation.'

"To all this Sandy Macharg replied, 'It is written, "Wives, obey your husbands;" but we have been stayed in our devotion, so let us pray;' and down he knelt. His wife knelt also, for she was as devout as bonnie; and beside them knelt their household, and all lights were extinguished.

"'Now this beats a',' muttered his wife to herself; 'however, I shall be obedient for a time; but if I dinna ken what all this is for before the morn by sunket-time, my tongue is nae langer a tongue, nor my hands worth wearing.'

"The voice of her husband in prayer interrupted this mental soliloquy; and ardently did he beseech to be preserved from the wiles of the fiends and the snares of Satan; 'from witches, ghosts, goblins, elves, fairies, spunkies, and water-kelpies; from the spectre shallop of Solway; from spirits visible and invisible; from the Haunted Ships and their unearthly tenants; from maritime spirits that plotted against godly men, and fell in love with their wives'——

"'Nay, but His presence be near us!' said his wife in a low tone of dismay. 'God guide my gudeman's wits! I never heard such a prayer from human lips before. But, Sandie, my man, for

Lord's sake, rise; what fearful light is this?—barn, and byre, and stable, maun be in a blaze; and Hawkie and Hurley, Doddie and Cherrie, and Damson-plum, will be smoored with reek and scorched with flame.'

"And a flood of light, but not so gross as a common fire, which ascended to heaven and filled all the court before the house, amply justified the good wife's suspicions. But to the terrors of fire, Sandie was as immovable as he was to the imaginary groans of the barren wife of Laird Laurie; and he held his wife, and threatened the weight of his right hand—and it was a heavy one—to all who ventured abroad, or even unbolted the door. The neighing and prancing of horses, and the bellowing of cows, augmented the horrors of the night; and to any one who only heard the din, it seemed that the whole onstead was in a blaze, and horses and cattle perishing in the flame. All wiles, common or extraordinary, were put in practice to entice or force the honest farmer and his wife to open their door; and when the like success attended every new stratagem, silence for a little while ensued, and a long, loud, and shrilling laugh wound up the dramatic efforts of the night.

"In the morning, when Laird Macharg went to the door, he found standing against one of the pilasters a piece of black ship oak, rudely fashioned into something like a human form, and which skilful people declared would have been clothed with seeming flesh and blood, and palmed upon him by elfin adroitness for his wife, had he admitted his visitants. A synod of wise men and women sat upon the woman of timber, and she was finally ordered to be devoured by fire, and that in the open air. A fire was soon made, and into it the elfin sculpture was tossed from the prongs of two pairs of pitchforks. The blaze that rose was awful to behold; and hissings, and burstings, and loud cracklings, and strange noises, were heard in the midst of the flame; and when the whole sank into ashes, a drinking cup of some precious metal was found; and this cup, fashioned no doubt by elfin skill, but rendered harmless by the purification with fire, the sons and daughters of Sandie Macharg and his wife drink out of to this day."

A TALE OF THE MARTYRS.

By James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd."

Red Tam Harkness came into the farm-house of Garrick, in the parish of Closeburn, one day, and began to look about for some place to hide in, when the gudewife, whose name was Jane Kilpatrick, said to him in great alarm, "What's the matter, what's the matter, Tam Harkness!"

"Hide me, or else I'm a dead man: that's the present matter, gudewife," said he. "But yet, when I have time—if ever I hae mair time—I have heavy news for you. For Christ's sake, hide me, Jane, for the killers are hard at hand."

Jane Kilpatrick sprung to her feet, but she was quite benumbed and powerless. She ran to one press and opened it, and then to another; there was not room to stuff a clog into either of them.

She looked into a bed; there was no shelter there, and her knees began to bend under her weight with terror. The voices of the troopers were by this time heard fast approaching, and Harkness had no other shift but in one moment to conceal himself behind the outer door, which was open, but the place where he stood was quite dark. He heard one of them say to another, "I fear the scoundrel is not here after all. Guard all the outhouses."

On that three or four of the troop rushed by him, and began to search the house and examine the inmates. Harkness that moment slid out without being observed, and tried to escape up a narrow glen called Kinrivah, immediately behind the house, but unluckily two troopers, who had been in another chase, there met him in the face. When he perceived them, he turned and ran to the eastward; on which they both fired, which raised the alarm, and instantly the whole pack were after him. It was afterwards conjectured that one of the shots had wounded him, for though he, with others, had been nearly surrounded that morning, and twice waylaid, he had quite outrun the soldiers; but now it was observed that some of them began to gain ground on him, and they still continued firing, till at length he fell into a kind of slough east from the farm-house of Locherben, where they came up to him, and ran him through with their bayonets. The spot is called Red Tam's Gutter to this day.

Jane Kilpatrick was one of the first who went to his mangled corpse—a woful sight, lying in the slough, and sore did she lament the loss of that poor and honest man. But there was more: she came to his corpse by a sort of yearning impatience to learn what was the woful news he had to communicate to her. But, alas! the intelligence was lost, and the man to whose bosom alone it had haply been confided was no more; yet Jane could scarcely prevail on herself to have any fears for her own husband, for she knew him to be in perfectly safe hiding in Glen Govar; still Tam's last words hung heavy on her mind. They were both suspected to have been at the harmless rising at Enterkin for the relief of a favourite minister, which was effected; and that was the extent of their crime. And though it was only suspicion, four men were shot on the hills that morning without trial or examination, and their bodies forbidden Christian burial.

One of these four was John Weir of Garrick, the husband of Jane Kilpatrick, a man of great worth and honour, and universally respected. He had left his hiding-place in order to carry some intelligence to his friends, and to pray with them, but was entrapped among them and slain. Still there was no intelligence brought to his family, save the single expression that fell from the lips of Thomas Harkness in a moment of distraction. Nevertheless, Jane could not rest, but set out all the way to her sister's house in Glen Govar, in Crawford Muir, and arrived there at eleven o'clock on a Sabbath evening. The family being at prayers when she went, and the house dark, she stood still behind the hallan, and all the time was convinced that the voice of the man that prayed was the voice of her husband, John Weir. All the time that fervent prayer lasted the tears of joy ran from her eyes, and her heart beat with gratitude to her Maker as she drank into her soul every sentence of the petitions and thanksgiving. Accordingly, when worship was ended, and the candle lighted, she went forward with a light heart and joyful countenance. Her sister embraced her, though manifestly embarrassed and troubled at seeing her there at such a time. From her she flew to embrace her husband, but he stood still like a statue, and did not meet her embrace. She gazed at him—

she grew pale, and, sitting down, she covered her face with her apron. This man was one of her husband's brothers, likewise in hiding, whom she had never before seen; but the tones of his voice, and even the devotional expressions that he used, were so like her husband's, that she mistook them for his.

All was now grief and consternation, for John Weir had not been seen or heard of there since Wednesday evening, when he had gone to warn his friends of some impending danger; but they all tried to comfort each other as well as they could, and, in particular, by saying they were all in the Lord's hand, and it behoved Him to do with them as seemed to Him good, with many other expressions of piety and submission. But the next morning, when the two sisters were about to part, the one says to the other,—"Jane, I cannot help telling you a strange confused dream that I had just afore ye wakened me. Ye ken I put nae faith in dreams, and I dinna want you to regard it; but it is as well for friends to tell them to ane anither, and then, if aught turn out like it in the course o' Providence, it may bring it to baith their minds that their spirits had been conversing with God."

"Na, na, Aggie, I want nane o' your confused dreams. I hae other things to think o', and mony's the time and oft ye hae deaved me wi' them, an' sometimes made me angry."

"I never bade ye believe them, Jeanie, but I likit aye to tell them to you; and this I daresay rose out o' our conversation yestreen. But I thought I was away (ye see I dinna ken where I was); and I was feared and confused, thinking I had lost my way. And then I came to an auld man, an' he says to me, 'Is it the road to heaven that you are seeking, Aggie?" An' I said, 'Ay,' for I didna like to deny't.

"'Then I'll tell you where you maun gang,' said he; 'ye maun gang up by the head of yon dark, mossy cleuch, an' you will find ane there that will show you the road to heaven;' and I said 'Ay,' for I didna like to refuse, although it was an uncouth looking road, and ane that I didna like to gang. But when I gaed to the cleuch-head, wha do I see sitting there but your ain gudeman, John Weir, and I thought I never saw him look sae weel; and when I gaed close up to him, there I saw another John Weir, lying strippet to the sark, and a' bedded in blood. He was cauld dead, and his head turned to ae side, and when I saw siccan a sight, I was terrified, an' held wide aff him. But I gaed up to the living John Weir, and said to him,—'Gudeman, how's this?'

"'Dinna ye see how it is, sister Aggie?' says he, 'I'm just set to herd this poor man that's lying here.'

"'Then I think ye'll no hae a sair post, John,' says I, 'for he disna look as if he wad rin far away.' It was very unreverend o' me to speak that gate, sister, but these were the words that I thought I said; an' as it is but a dream, ye ken ye needna heed it.

"'Alas, poor Aggie,' says he, 'ye are still in the gall o' bitterness. Look ower your right shoulder, an' ye will see what I hae to do. An' sae I looked ower my right shoulder, and there saw a hale drove o' foxes and wulcats, an' fumarts, an' martins, an' corby-craws, an' a hunder vile beasts, a' staunin' round wi' glaring een, eager to be at the corpse of the dead John Weir; an' then I was terribly astoundit, an' I says to him, 'Gudeman, how is this?'

"'I am commissioned to keep these awa,' said he. 'Do you think these een that are yet open to the light o' heaven, and that tongue that has to syllable the praises of a Redeemer far within yon sky, should be left to become a prey o' siccan vermin as these?'

"'Will it make sae vera muckle difference, John Weir,' said I, 'whether

the carcass is eaten up by these or by the worms?'

"'Ah, Aggie, Aggie! worms are worms; but ye little wot what these are,' says he. 'But John Weir has warred wi' them a' his life, an' that to some purpose, and they maunna get the advantage o' him now.'

"'But which is the right John Weir?' said I; 'for here is ane lying stiff and lappered in his blood, and another in health and strength and sound mind.'

"'I am the right John Weir,' says he. 'Did you ever think the good man o' Garrick could die! Na, na, Aggie; Clavers could only kill the body, an' that's but the poorest part o' the man. But where are you gaun this wild gate?'

"'I was directed this way on my road to heaven,' said I.

"'Ay, an' ye were directed right, then,' says he; 'for this is the direct path to heaven, and there is no other.'

"'That is very extraordinary,' says I. 'And, pray, what is the name of this place, that I may direct my sister Jane, your wife, and all my friends by the same way.'

"'This is Faith's Hope,' says he.

At the mention of this place, Jane Kilpatrick of Garrick rose slowly up to her feet, and held up both her hands. "Hold, hold, sister Aggie," cried she, "you have told enough. Was it in the head of Faith's Hope that you saw this vision of my dead husband?"

"Yes; but at the same time I saw your husband alive."

"Then I fear your dream has a double meaning," she answered; "for though it appears like a religious allegory, you do not know that there really is such a place, and that not very far from our house. I have often laughed at your dreams, sister, but this one hurries me from you to-day with a heavy and trembling heart."

Jane left Glen Govar by the break of day, and took her way through the wild ranges of Crawford Muir, straight for the head of Faith's Hope. She had some bread in her lap, and a little Bible that she always carried with her; and without one to assist or comfort her, she went in search of her lost husband. Before she reached the head of that wild glen, the day was far spent, and the sun wearing down. The valley of Nith lay spread far below her in all its beauty, but around her there was nothing but darkness, dread, and desolation. The mist hovered on the hills, and on the skirts of the mist the ravens sailed about in circles, croaking furiously, which had a most ominous effect on the heart of poor Jane. As she advanced further up, she perceived a fox and an eagle sitting over against each other, watching something which yet they seemed terrified to approach; and right between them, in a little green hollow, surrounded by black haggs, she found the corpse of her husband in the same manner as described by her sister. He was stripped of his coat and vest, which it was thought he had thrown from him when flying from the soldiers, to enable him to effect his escape. He was shot through the heart with two bullets, but nothing relating to his death was ever known, whether he died praying, or was shot as he fled; but there was he found lying, bathed in his blood, in the wilderness, and none of the wild beasts of the forest had dared to touch his lifeless form.

The bitterness of death was now past with poor Jane. Her staff and shield was taken from her right hand, and laid low in death by the violence of wicked men. True, she had still a home to go to, although that home was robbed and spoiled; but she found that without him it was no home, and that where his beloved form reposed, there was the home of her rest. She washed his wounds and the stains of blood from his body, tied her napkin round his face, covered him with her

apron, and sat down and watched beside him all the livelong night, praying to the Almighty, and singing hymns and spiritual songs alternately. The next day she warned her friends and neighbours, who went with her the following night, and buried him privately in the north-west corner of the churchyard of Morton.

THE TOWN DRUMMER.

By John Galt.

For many a year one Robin Boss had been town drummer; he was a relic of some American war fencibles, and was, to say the truth of him, a divor body, with no manner of conduct, saving a very earnest endeavour to fill himself fou as often as he could get the means; the consequence of which was, that his face was as plooky as a curran bun, and his nose as red as a partan's tae.

One afternoon there was need to send out a proclamation to abolish a practice that was growing into a custom, in some of the by-parts of the town, of keeping swine at large—ordering them to be confined in proper styes, and other suitable places. As on all occasions when the matter to be proclaimed was from the magistrates, Thomas, on this, was attended by the town-officers in their Sunday garbs, and with their halberts in their hands; but the abominable and irreverent creature was so drunk, that he wam'let to and fro over the drum, as if there had not been a bane in his body. He was seemingly as soople and as senseless as a bolster. Still, as this was no new thing with him, it might have passed; for James Hound, the senior officer, was in the practice, when Robin was in that state, of reading the proclamations himself. On this occasion, however, James happened to be absent on some hue and cry quest, and another of the officers (I forget which) was appointed to perform for him. Robin, accustomed to James, no sooner heard the other man begin to read than he began to curse and swear at him as an incapable nincompoop—an impertinent term that he was much addicted to. The grammar school was, at the time skailing, and the boys seeing the stramash, gathered round the officer, and yelling and shouting, encouraged Robin more and more into rebellion, till at last they worked up his corruption to such a pitch, that he took the drum from about his neck, and made it fly like a bombshell at the officer's head.

The officers behaved very well, for they dragged Robin by the lug and the horn to the tolbooth, and then came with their complaint to me. Seeing how the authorities had been set at nought, and the necessity there was of making an example, I forthwith ordered Robin to be cashiered from the service of the town; and as so important a concern as a proclamation ought not to be delayed, I likewise, upon the spot, ordered the officers to take a lad that had been also a drummer in a marching regiment, and go with him to make the proclamation.

Nothing could be done in a more earnest and zealous public spirit than this was done by me. But habit had begot in the town a partiality for the drunken ne'er-do-well, Robin; and this just act of mine was immediately condemned as a daring stretch of arbitrary power; and the consequence was, that when the council met next day, some

sharp words flew among us, as to my usurping an undue authority; and the thanks I got for my pains was the mortification to see the worthless body restored to full power and dignity, with no other reward than an admonition to behave better for the future. Now, I leave it to the unbiassed judgment of posterity to determine if any public man could be more ungraciously treated by his colleagues than I was on this occasion. But, verily, the council had their reward

The divor Robin Boss being, as I have recorded, reinstated in office, soon began to play his old tricks. In the course of the week after the Michaelmas term at which my second provostry ended, he was so insupportably drunk that he fell head foremost into his drum, which cost the town five-and-twenty shillings for a new one—an accident that was not without some satisfaction to me; and I trow I was not sparing in my derisive commendations on the worth of such a public officer. Nevertheless, he was still kept on, some befriending him for compassion, and others as it were to spite me.

But Robin's good behaviour did not end with breaking the drum, and costing a new one. In the course of the winter it was his custom to beat, "Go to bed, Tom," about ten o'clock at night, and the reveille at five in the morning. In one of his drunken fits he made a mistake, and instead of going his rounds as usual at ten o'clock, he had fallen asleep in a change-house, and waking about the midnight hour in the terror of some whisky dream, he seized his drum, and running into the streets, began to strike the fire-beat in the most awful manner.

It was a fine clear frosty moonlight, and the hollow sound of the drum resounded through the silent streets like thunder. In a moment everybody was afoot, and the cry of "Whaur is't? whaur's the fire?" was heard echoing from all sides. Robin, quite unconscious that he alone was the cause of the alarm, still went along beating the dreadful summons. I heard the noise and rose; but while I was drawing on my stockings in the chair at the bed-head, and telling Mrs Pawkie to compose herself, for our houses were all insured, I suddenly recollected that Robin had the night before neglected to go his rounds at ten o'clock as usual, and the thought came into my head that the alarm might be one of his inebriated mistakes; so, instead of dressing myself any further, I went to the window, and looked out through the glass, without opening it, for, being in my night-clothes, I was afraid of taking cold.

The street was as throng as on a market day, and every face in the moonlight was pale with fear. Men and lads were running with their coats, and carrying their breeches in their hands; wives and maidens were all asking questions at one another, and even lasses were fleeing to and fro, like water-nymphs with urns, having stoups and pails in their hands. There was swearing and tearing of men, hoarse with the rage of impatience, at the tolbooth, getting out the fire-engine from its stance under the stair; and loud and terrible afar off, and over all, came the peal of alarm from drunken Robin's drum.

I could scarcely keep my composity when I beheld and heard all this, for I was soon thoroughly persuaded of the fact. At last I saw Deacon Girdwood, the chief advocate and champion of Robin, passing down the causeway like a demented man, with a red nightcap, and his big-coat on; for some had cried that the fire was in his yard.

"Deacon," cried I, opening the window, forgetting, in the jocularity of the moment, the risk I ran from being so naked; "whaur away sae fast, deacon?"

The deacon stopped and said, "Is't out? is't out?"

"Gang your ways home," quo' I, very

coolly, "for I hae a notion that a' this hobleshow's but the fume of a gill in your friend Robin's head."

"It's no possible!" exclaimed the deacon.

'Possible here or possible there, Mr Girdwood," quo' I, "it's ower cauld for me to stand talking wi' you here; we'll learn the rights o't in the morning, so good night;" and with that I pulled down the window. But scarcely had I done so, when a shout of laughter came gathering up the street, and soon after poor drunken Robin was brought along by the cuff of the neck, between two of the town-officers, one of them carrying his drum. The next day he was put out of office for ever, and folk recollecting in what manner I had acted towards him before, the outcry about my arbitrary power was forgotten in the blame that was heaped upon those who had espoused Robin's cause against me.

THE AWFUL NIGHT.

By D. M. Moir (Delta).

Ha!—'twas but a dream;
But then so terrible, it shakes my soul!
Cold drops of sweat hang on my trembling flesh;
My blood grows chilly, and I freeze with horror.
—*Richard the Third.*

The Fire-King one day rather amorous felt;
He mounted his hot copper filly;
His breeches and boots were of tin, and the belt
Was made of cast-iron, for fear it should melt
With the heat of the copper colt's belly.
Oh! then there was glitter and fire in each eye,
For two living coals were the symbols;
His teeth were calcined, and his tongue was so dry,
It rattled against them as though you should try
To play the piano on thimbles.
Rejected Addresses.

In the course of a fortnight from the time I parted with Maister Glen, the Lauder carrier, limping Jamie, brought his callant to our shop door in his hand. He was a tall, slender laddie, some fourteen years old, and sore grown away from his clothes. There was something genty and delicate like about him, having a pale, sharp face, blue eyes, a nose like a hawk's, and long yellow hair hanging about his haffets, as if barbers were unco scarce cattle among the howes of the Lammermoor hills. Having a general experience of human nature, I saw that I would have something to do towards bringing him into a state of rational civilisation; but, considering his opportunities, he had been well educated, and I liked his appearance on the whole not that ill.

To divert him a while, as I did not intend yoking him to work the first day, I sent out Benjie with him, after giving him some refreshment of bread and milk, to let him see the town and all the uncos about it. I told Benjie first to take him to the auld kirk, which is a wonderful building, steeple and aisle; and as for mason work, far before anything to be seen or heard tell of in our day; syne to Lugton brig, which is grand affair, hanging over the river Esk and the flour-mills like a rainbow; syne to the Tolbooth, which is a terror to evil-doers, and from which the Lord preserve us all! syne to the Market, where ye'll see lamb, beef, mutton, and veal, hanging up on the cleeks, in roasting and boiling pieces—spar-rib, jiggot, shoulder, and heuk-bane, in the great prodigality of abundance; and syne down to the Duke's gate, by looking

through the bonny white painted iron-staunchels of which ye'll see the deer running beneath the green trees; and the palace itself, in the inside of which dwells one that needs not be proud to call the king his cousin.

Brawly did I know, that it is a little after a laddie's being loosed from his mother's apron-string, and hurried from home, till the mind can make itself up to stay among fremit folk; or that the attention can be roused to anything said or done, however simple in the uptake. So, after Benjie brought Mungo home again, gey forfaughten and wearied-out like, I bade the wife give him his four-hours, and told him he might go to his bed as soon as he liked. Jalousing also, at the same time, that creatures brought up in the country have strange notions about them with respect to supernaturals—such as ghosts, brownies, fairies, and bogles—to say nothing of witches, warlocks, and evil-spirits, I made Benjie take off his clothes and lie down beside him, as I said, to keep him warm; but, in plain matter of fact (between friends), that the callant might sleep sounder, finding himself in a strange bed, and not very sure as to how the house stood as to the matter of a good name.

Knowing by my own common sense, and from long experience of the ways of a wicked world, that there is nothing like industry, I went to Mungo's bed-side in the morning, and wakened him betimes. Indeed, I'm leein' there; I need not call it wakening him, for Benjie told me, when he was supping his parritch out of his luggie at break-fast-time, that he never winked an eye all night, and that sometimes he heard him greetin' to himself in the dark—such and so powerful is our love of home and the force of natural affection. Howsoever, as I was saying, I took him ben the house with me down to the workshop, where I had begun to cut out a pair of nankeen trowsers for a young lad that was to be married the week after to a servant-maid of Mr Wiggie's, —a trig quean, that afterwards made him a good wife, and the father of a numerous small family.

Speaking of nankeen, I would advise everyone, as a friend, to buy the Indian, and not the British kind, the expense of outlay being ill hained, even at six-pence a-yard—the latter not standing the washing, but making a man's legs, at a distance, look like a yellow yorline.

It behoved me now as a maister, bent on the improvement of his prentice, to commence learning Mungo some few of the mysteries of our trade; so having showed him the way to crook his hough (example is better than precept, as James Batter observes), I taught him the plan of holding the needle; and having fitted his middle-finger with a bottomless thimble of our own sort, I set him to sewing the cotton-lining into one leg, knowing that it was a part not very particular, and not very likely to be seen; so that the matter was not great, whether the stitching was exactly regular, or rather in the zigzag line. As is customary with all new beginners, he made a desperate awkward hand at it, and of which I would of course have said nothing, but that he chanced to brog his thumb, and completely soiled the whole piece of work with the stains of blood; which, for one thing, could not wash out without being seen; and, for another, was an unlucky omen to happen to a marriage garment.

Every man should be on his guard: this was a lesson I learned when I was in the volunteers, at the time Buonaparte was expected to land down at Dunbar. Luckily for me in this case, I had, by some foolish mistake or another, made an allowance of a half yard over and above what I found I could manage to shape on; so I boldly made up my mind to cut out the piece altogether, it being in the back seam. In that business I trust I showed the

art of a good tradesman, having managed to do it so neatly that it could not be noticed without the narrowest inspection; and, having the advantage of a covering by the coat flaps, had indeed no chance of being so, except on desperately windy days.

In the week succeeding that on which this unlucky mischance happened, an accident almost as bad befell, though not to me, further than that every one is bound by the ten commandments, to say nothing of his own conscience, to take a part in the afflictions that befall their door-neighbours.

When the voice of man was whisht, and all was sunk in the sound sleep of midnight, it chanced that I was busy dreaming that I was sitting, one of the spectators, looking at another play-acting business. Before coming this length, howsoever, I should by right have observed, that ere going to bed I had eaten for my supper part of a black pudding and two sausages, that widow Grassie had sent in a compliment to my wife, being a genteel woman, and mindful of her friends—so that I must have had some sort of nightmare, and not been exactly in my seven senses, else I could not have been even dreaming of siccan a place. Well, as I was saying, in the play-house I thought I was; and all at once I heard Maister Wiggie, like one crying in the wilderness, hallooing with a loud voice through the window, bidding me flee from the snares, traps, and gin-nets of the Evil One, and from the terrors of the wrath to come. I was in a terrible funk; and just as I was trying to rise from the seat, that seemed somehow glued to my body and would not let me, to reach down my hat, which, with its glazed cover, was hanging on a pin to one side, my face all red, and glowing like a fiery furnace, for shame of being a second time caught in deadly sin, I heard the kirk-bell jow-jowing, as if it was the last trump summoning sinners to their long and black account; and Maister Wiggie thrust in his arm in his desperation, in a whirlwind of passion, claughting hold of my hand like a vice, to drag me out head foremost. Even in my sleep, howsoever, it appears that I like free-will, and ken that there are no slaves in our blessed country; so I tried with all my might to pull against him, and gave his arm such a drive back, that he seemed to bleach over on his side, and raised a hullaballoo of a yell, that not only wakened me, but made me start upright in my bed.

For all the world such a scene! My wife was roaring "Murder, murder!—Mansie Wauch, will ye no wauken?—Murder, murder! ye've felled me wi' your nieve,—ye've felled me outright,—I'm gone for evermair,—my hale teeth are doun my throat. Will ye no wauken, Mansie Wauch?—will ye no wauken?—Murder, murder!—I say murder, murder, murder, murder!"

"Who's murdering us?" cried I, throwing my cowl back on the pillow, and rubbing my eyes in the hurry of a tremendous fright.—"Wha's murdering us?—where's the robbers?—send for the town officer!"

"O Mansie!—O Mansie!" said Nanse, in a kind of greeting tone, "I daursay ye've felled me—but no matter, now I've gotten ye roused. Do ye no see the hale street in a bleeze of flames? Bad is the best; we maun either be burned to death, or out of house and hall, without a rag to cover our nakedness. Where's my son?—where's my dear bairn, Benjie?"

In a most awful consternation, I jumped at this out to the middle of the floor, hearing the causeway all in an uproar of voices; and seeing the flichtering of the flames glancing on the houses in the opposite side of the street, all the windows of which were filled with the heads of half-naked folks in round-eared mutches or Kilmarnocks,

their mouths open, and their eyes staring with fright; while the sound of the fire-engine, rattling through the streets like thunder, seemed like the dead cart of the plague come to hurry away the corpses of the deceased for interment in the kirkyard.

Never such a spectacle was witnessed in this world of sin and sorrow since the creation of Adam. I pulled up the window and looked out; and, lo and behold! the very next house to our own was all in a lowe from cellar to garret; the burning joists hissing and cracking like mad; and the very wind blew along as warm as if it had been out of the mouth of a baker's oven!

It was a most awful spectacle! more by token to me, who was likely to be intimately concerned with it; and beating my brow with my clenched nieve like a distracted creature, I saw that the labour of my whole life was likely to go for nought, and me to be a ruined man; all the earnings of my industry being laid out on my stock-in-trade, and on the plenishing of our bit house. The darkness of the latter days came over my spirit like a vision before the prophet Isaiah; and I could see nothing in the years to come but beggary and starvation; myself a fallen old man, with an out-at-the-elbows coat, a greasy hat, and a bald pow, hirpling over a staff, requeeshting an awmous; Nanse a broken-hearted beggar wife, torn down to tatters, and weeping like Rachel when she thought on better days; and poor wee Benjie going from door to door with a meal-pock on his back.

The thought first dung me stupid, and then drove me to desperation; and not even minding the dear wife of my bosom, that had fainted away as dead as a herring, I pulled on my trowsers like mad, and rushed out into the street, bareheaded and barefoot as the day that Lucky Bringthereout dragged me into the world.

The crowd saw in the twinkling of an eyeball that I was a desperate man, fierce as Sir William Wallace, and not to be withstood by gentle or simple. So most of them made way for me; they that tried to stop me finding it a bad job, being heeled over from right to left, on the broad of their backs, like flounders, without respect of age or person; some old women that were obstrepulous being gey sore hurt, and one of them has a pain in her hainch even to this day. When I had got almost to the door-cheek of the burning house, I found one grupping me by the back like grim death; and in looking over my shoulder, who was it but Nanse herself, that, rising up from her faint, had pursued me like a whirlwind. It was a heavy trial, but my duty to myself in the first place, and to my neighbours in the second, roused me up to withstand it; so, making a spend like a greyhound, I left the hindside of my shirt in her grasp, like Joseph's garment in the nieve of Potiphar's wife, and up the stairs head-foremost among the flames.

Mercy keep us all! what a sight for mortal man to glower at with his living eyes! The bells were tolling amid the dark, like a summons from above for the parish of Dalkeith to pack off to another world; the drums were beat-beating as if the French were coming, thousand on thousand, to kill, slay, and devour every maid and mother's son of us; the fire-engine pump-pump-pumping like daft, showering the water like rainbows, as if the windows of heaven were opened, and the days of old Noah come back again; and the rabble throwing the good furniture over the windows like onion peelings, where it either felled the folk below, or was dung to a thousand shivers on the causey. I cried to them for the love of goodness to make search in the beds, in case there might be any weans there, human life being still more precious than human means; but not a living soul was seen but a cat, which, being raised and wild with the din,

would on no consideration allow itself to be catched. Jacob Dribble found that to his cost; for right or wrong, having a drappie in his head, he swore like a trooper that he would catch her, and carry her down beneath his oxter; so forward he weired her into a corner, crouching on his hunkers. He had much better have let it alone; for it fuffed over his shoulder like wildfire, and, scarting his back all the way down, jumped like a lamplighter head-foremost through the flames, where, in the raging and roaring of the devouring element, its pitiful cries were soon hushed to silence for ever and ever.

At long and last, a woman's howl was heard on the street, lamenting, like Hagar over young Ishmael in the wilderness of Beersheba, and crying that her old grannie, that was a lameter, and had been bedridden for four years come the Martinmas following, was burning to a cinder in the fore-garret. My heart was like to burst within me when I heard this dismal news, remembering that I myself had once an old mother, that was now in the mools; so I brushed up the stair like a hatter, and burst open the door of the fore-garret—for in the hurry I could not find the sneck, and did not like to stand on ceremony. I could not see my finger before me, and did not know my right hand from the left, for the smoke; but I groped round and round, though the reek mostly cut my breath, and made me cough at no allowance, till at last I catched hold of something cold and clammy, which I gave a pull, not knowing what it was, but found out to be the old wife's nose. I cried out as loud as I was able for the poor creature to hoise herself up into my arms; but, receiving no answer, I discovered in a moment that she was suffocated, the foul air having gone down her wrong hause; and, though I had aye a terror at looking at, far less handling, a dead corpse, there was something brave within me at the moment, my blood being up; so I caught hold of her by the shoulders, and hurling her with all my might out of her bed, got her lifted on my back heads and thraws in the manner of a boll of meal, and away as fast as my legs could carry me.

There was a providence in this haste; for ere I was half-way down the stair, the floor fell with a thud like thunder; and such a combustion of soot, stour, and sparks arose, as was never seen or heard tell of in the memory of man since the day that Samson pulled over the pillars in the house of Dagon, and smoored all the mocking Philistines as flat as flounders. For the space of a minute I was as blind as a beetle, and was like to be choked for want of breath; however, as the dust began to clear up, I saw an open window, and hallooed down to the crowd for the sake of mercy to bring a ladder, to save the lives of two perishing fellow-creatures, for now my own was also in imminent jeopardy. They were long of coming, and I did not know what to do; so thinking that the old wife, as she had not spoken, was maybe dead already, I was once determined just to let her drop down upon the street, but I knew that the so doing would have cracked every bone in her body, and the glory of my bravery would thus have been worse than lost. I persevered, therefore, though I was ready to fall down under the dead weight, she not being able to help herself, and having a deal of beef in her skin for an old woman of eighty; but I got a lean, by squeezing her a wee between me and the wall.

I thought they would never have come, for my shoeless feet were all bruised and bleeding from the crunched lime and the splinters of broken stones; but, at long and last, a ladder was hoisted up, and having fastened a kinch of ropes beneath her oxters, I let her slide down over the upper step, by way of a pillyshee, having the satisfaction of

seeing her safely landed in the arms o seven old wives, that were waiting witl a cosey warm blanket below. Havin accomplished this grand manœuvre wherein I succeeded in saving the pre cious life of a woman of eighty, tha had been four long years bedridden, tripped down the steps myself like nine-year-old, and had the pleasure when the roof fell in, to know that for one had done my duty; and that, to the best of my knowledge, no living creature, except the poor cat, had perished within the jaws of the devouring element.

But bide a wee; the work was, as yet, only half done. The fire was still roaring and raging, every puff of wind that blew through the black firmament driving the red sparks high into the air, where they died away like the tail of a comet, or the train of a sky-rocket; the joisting crazing, cracking, and tumbling down; and now and then the bursting cans playing flee in a hundred flinders from the chimney-heads. One would have naturally enough thought that our engine could have drowned out a fire of any kind whatsoever in half a second, scores of folks driving about with pitcherfuls of water, and scaling half of it on one another and the causey in their hurry; but, woe's me! it did not play puh on the red-het stones that whizzed like iron in a smiddy trough; so, as soon as it was darkness and smoke in one place, it was fire and fury in another.

My anxiety was great. Seeing that I had done my best for my neighbours, it behoved me now, in my turn, to try and see what I could do for myself; so, notwithstanding the remonstrances of my friend James Batter—whom Nanse, knowing I had bare feet, had sent out to seek me, with a pair of shoon in his hand, and who, in scratching his head, mostly rugged out every hair of his wig with sheer vexation—I ran off, and mounted the ladder a second time, and succeeded, after muckle speeling, in getting upon the top of the wall; where, having a bucket slung up to me by means of a rope, I swashed down such showers on the top of the flames, that I soon did more good, in the space of five minutes, than the engine and the ten men, that were all in a broth of perspiration with pumping it, did the whole night over; to say nothing of the multitude of drawers of water, men, wives, and weans, with their cuddies, leglins, pitchers, pails, and water-stoups; having the satisfaction, in a short time, to observe everything getting as black as the crown of my hat, and the gable of my own house becoming as cool as a cucumber.

Being a man of method, and acquainted with business, I could have liked to have given a finishing stitch to my work before descending the ladder; but, losh me! sic a whingeing, girning, greeting, and roaring got up all of a sudden, as was never seen or heard of since Bowed Joseph* raised the mealmob, and burned Johnnie Wilkes in effigy, and, looking down, I saw Benjie, the bairn of my own heart, and the callant Glen, my apprentice on trial, that had both been as sound as tops till this blessed moment, standing in their nightgowns and their little red cowls, rubbing their eyes, cowering with cold and fright, and making an awful uproar, crying on me to come down and not be killed. The voice of Benjie especially pierced through and through my heart, like a two-edged sword, and I could on no manner of account suffer myself to bear it any longer, as I jaloused the bairn would have gone into convulsion fits if I had not heeded him; so, making a sign to them to be quiet, I came my ways down, taking hold of one in ilka hand, which must have been a fatherly sight to the spectators that saw us. After waiting on the crown of the causey for half-an-hour, to

* A noted Edinburgh character.

make sure that the fire was extinguished, and all tight and right, I saw the crowd scaling, and thought it best to go in too, carrying the two youngsters along with me. When I began to move off, however, siccan a cheering of the multitude got up as would have deafened a cannon; and, though I say it myself, who should not say it, they seemed struck with a sore amazement at my heroic behaviour, following me with loud cheers, even to the threshold of my own door.

From this folk should condescend to take a lesson, seeing that, though the world is a bitter bad world, yet that good deeds are not only a reward to themselves, but call forth the applause of Jew and Gentile; for the sweet savour of my conduct, on this memorable night, remained in my nostrils for goodness knows the length of time, many praising my brave humanity in public companies and assemblies of the people, such as strawberry ploys, council meetings, dinner parties, and so forth; and many in private conversation at their own ingle-cheek, by way of two-handed crack; in stage-coach confab, and in causey talk in the forenoon, before going in to take their meridians. Indeed, between friends, the business proved in the upshot of no small advantage to me, bringing to me a sowd of strange faces, by way of customers, both gentle and simple, that I verily believe had not so muckle as ever heard of my name before, and giving me many a coat to cut, and cloth to shape, that, but for my gallant behaviour on the fearsome night aforesaid, would doubtless have been cut, sewed, and shaped by other hands. Indeed, considering the great noise the thing made in the world, it is no wonder that every one was anxious to have a garment of wearing apparel made by the individual same hands that had succeeded, under Providence, in saving the precious life of an old woman of eighty, that had been bedridden, some say, four years come Yule, and others, come Martinmas.

When we got to the ingle-side, and, barring the door, saw that all was safe, it was now three in the morning; so we thought it by much the best way of managing, not to think of sleeping any more, but to be on the look-out—as we aye used to be when walking sentry in the volunteers—in case the flames should, by ony mischancy accident or other, happen to break out again. My wife blamed my hardihood muckle, and the rashness with which I had ventured at once to places where even masons and slaters were afraid to put foot on; yet I saw, in the interim, that she looked on me with a prouder eye—knowing herself the helpmate of one that had courageously risked his neck, and every bone in his skin, in the cause of humanity. I saw this as plain as a pikestaff, as, with one of her kindest looks, she insisted on my putting on a better happing to screen me from the cold, and on my taking something comfortable inwardly towards the dispelling of bad consequences. So, after half a minute's stand-out, by way of refusal like, I agreed to a cupful of het-pint, as I thought it would be a thing Mungo Glen might never have had the good fortune to have tasted, and as it might operate by way of a cordial on the gallant Benjie, who kept aye smally and in a dwining way. No sooner said than done, and off Nanse brushed in a couple of hurries to make the het-pint.

After the small beer was put into the pan to boil, we found, to our great mortification, that there was no eggs in the house, and Benjie was sent out with a candle to the hen-house, to see if any of the hens had laid since gloaming, and fetch what he could get. In the middle of the meantime, I was expatiating to Mungo on what taste it would have, and how he had never seen anything finer

than it would be, when in ran Benjie, all out of breath, and his face as pale as a dish-clout.

"What's the matter, Benjie, what's the matter?" said I to him, rising up from my chair in a great hurry of a fright. "Has onybody killed ye? or is the fire broken out again? or has the French landed? or have ye seen a ghost? or are"—

"Eh, crifty!" cried Benjie, coming till his speech, "they're a' aff—cock and hens and a'; there's naething left but the rotten nest-egg in the corner!"

This was an awful dispensation. In the midst of the desolation of the fire—such is the depravity of human nature—some ne'er-do-weels had taken advantage of my absence to break open the hen-house door; and our whole stock of poultry, the cock along with our seven hens—two of them tappit, and one muffled—were carried away bodily, stoop and roop.

On this subject, howsoever, I shall say no more, but merely observe in conclusion, that, as to our het-pint, we were obliged to make the best of a bad bargain, making up with whisky what it wanted in eggs; though our banquet could not be called altogether a merry one, the joys of our escape from the horrors of the fire being damped, as it were by a wet blanket, on account of the nefarious pillaging of our hen-house.

ROSE JAMIESON.

I looked on thy death-cold face, my lassie,—
I looked on thy death-cold face;
Thou seemed a lily new cut i' the bud,
And fading at its place.

Thy lips were ruddy and calm, my lassie,—
Thy lips were ruddy and calm;
But gane was the holy breath o' heaven,
To sing the evening psalm.—*Allan Cunningham.*

ANDREW JAMIESON was a thorough-paced Cameronian. He held hats in abomination, as they savoured of Erastianism; abhorred boots, because the troopers of 1685 wore them while galloping over the wilds of Dumfriesshire in quest of the persecuted remnant; testified against the use of "fanners" in the process of separating the chaff from the wheat, as a tacit renunciation of the doctrine of a superintending Providence. He judged of the excellences or defects of a sermon by its length; and on that of prayer by the colloquial familiarity which the clergyman held with the Deity; pronounced on his orthodoxy by the complexion of his text; and lifted up his voice against gowns, bands, and white pocket-handkerchiefs, as frippery belonging to the scarlet lady. Academical honours were his loathing, as he knew that, like plenary indulgences, they are, and were, to be had for money; nor would his prejudice allow him to distinguish between the man who received a D.D.-ship as the honourable reward of a life devoted to sacred literature, and him who carried it by lodging a professor's wife and daughter during the race week.

Sermons in MS., though they had been the composition of a Chalmers, and read with the classic elocution of a Thomson, appeared to him as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; or, in his own vernacular phrase, "in at the tae lug, and out at the tither." 'Twas the pride of his heart to travel twenty or thirty miles on foot to hear a favourite preacher; or to attend sacramental occasions in the air, in unfrequented districts, in imitation of the heroes of the covenant, who scorned to square their creed to the mandates of a tyrannical government; and I verily believe that a slight touch of persecution would have added to his enjoyments in this sublunary sphere; but this, as he frequently hinted, was too great a privilege to hope for from a government "neither cold nor hot."

Andrew was a small farmer in the uplands of Nithsdale, had been prudent to a proverb in worldly matters, and consequently was rich, not only in his hopes of futurity, but in the more tangible currency of this sinful world. Frugality had been one of his most prominent characteristics; and while many less wealthy neighbours sported broad cloth at fairs and preachings, according to his inimitable countryman—

> His garb was gude gray hodden,—
> His bonnet was a broad one;

which garb, and which bonnet, had been familiar to the frequenters of "tent preachings" for the greater part of forty years. Such was the father of Rose Jamieson, the beautiful, the meek, the modest Rose Jamieson, whose fame extended for many a mile round her father's dwelling; and whose fortune perhaps lent her an additional charm in the eyes of the less worthy of her suitors. Beautiful women have been so often described by master-spirits, that it would be presumptuous in me to attempt it. I entreat the reader, therefore, to place before his mind's eye Milton's Eve, or Thomson's Lavinia, or Campbell's Gertrude, or some of the still more glorious creations of Scott or Shakspeare; 'twill serve my purpose a thousand times better, and save me a world of trouble. Having thus briefly disposed of her bodily and mental attractions, it is needless to add that she was sought in marriage by the flower of the peasantry, and even by many above that rank in life, but shrunk from their society, as the sensitive plant shrinks from the human touch, or the sunflower when its idol withdraws to his ocean bed.

Her pursuits were of an intellectual nature. She loved literature immensely; and though her parent was sufficiently rigid and unbending in general, relative to what he designated the "vanities," yet he gladly supplied her with the means of gratifying her taste for books, and even condescended at intervals to direct her in the choice of their "mute friends;" but his selections generally consisted of those tremendous folios of divinity, both doctrinal and controversial, which even yet may be seen on the shelves of our more unsophisticated peasantry; and her masculine mind was not slow in making herself mistress of their voluminous contents.

By a careful perusal, however, of the immaculate Volume which the great Founder of Christianity left as a guide to His followers, she perceived that her father's favourite authors did not always resemble their Divine Master in the milder virtues—such as charity, which thinketh no evil; brotherly kindness, which is ever and anon ready to bear with an erring being; and that humility of spirit which is ever ready to esteem another better than one's self. As her mind got emancipated from the thraldom of the austere dogmas which had been inculcated on it from infancy, she saw a very great deal to admire, nay, to love, in the doctrines of those very persons whom

her father had branded with the name of "prelatists" and "malignants;" and hence she began to examine more closely into the merits of the controversy which raged with so much violence between persons worshipping the same God, through the mediation of the same Redeemer.

The result was, that she saw much to praise and much to blame on both sides, and she endeavoured to cover the failings of either party with the mantle of Christian love. That many of the Episcopalian clergy of that unhappy period, when the lieges were forced to attend the parish church at the point of the bayonet, disgraced their sacred profession, and brought obloquy on the holy name by which they were called, can neither be denied nor disputed. That some of them acted like incarnations of the devil, will not be controverted even in our own times, when truth, like the meridian sun, has dissipated the clouds of error and prejudice; but it is equally true, that there were men among them who adorned their profession by a walk and conversation becoming the Gospel, and who lamented in secret the evils which their circumscribed influence could not avert. Who does not revere the memory of the great and good Leighton, whose philanthropy extended to all mankind—whose whole existence was a living commentary on the great doctrine which was ever on his lips—namely, that the Founder of Christianity came to proclaim "peace on earth, good-will to men?" After the Revolution, when Presbyterianism again unfurled her banners to the mountain-breezes of our country—banners which, alas! had been wofully trampled under foot, and in defending which the best blood in Scotland had been poured out like water—the son of one of the ejected curates settled in the parish of ——— as a farmer, retaining, however, the religious principles in which he had been educated, and which were now doubly dear to him in the hour of his church's adversity.

Like his father, he was a Christian, not only in theory, but in practice; his faith was evinced, not by vague declamation, not by ultra-sanctimoniousness, but by its genuine fruits—namely, good works.

Son succeeded sire in the same district and the same principles; and it seemed that a peculiar blessing had descended on the whole race; as whatever things were lovely, or of good report, these things they did; and the promise to the meek was fulfilled them, for they literally "inherited the earth."

Their flocks and herds were numerous; their corn and pasture fields ample;—they enlarged their borders, and, at the time this sketch commences, they mingled with the aristocracy of the county.

The youngest son of a branch of this family had studied at the University of Oxford, with a view to the Church of which his family had been such distinguished members. He was a youth not only of ardent piety, but of intense application; he fearlessly grappled with the most abstruse subjects; he divested philosophy of its jargon, and divinity of its verbosity; and nothing was so dear to his heart as when he discovered truth like a diamond amidst the heaps of rubbish which had been accumulating for ages.

But, alas! like the gentle Kirke White, while his mind was expanding and luxuriating amid the treasures of Greece and Rome, and the still more sacred stores of Palestine, his body was declining with corresponding rapidity; therefore, with attenuated frame and depressed spirits, he sought once more his native vale, to inhale health with its invigorating breezes.

Secluded from the great world, and debarred from pursuing his favourite studies, he sought the society of Rose Jamieson as an antidote to that *ennui*

which will inevitably obtrude itself on the mind amid the solitudes of a thinly peopled country. The great poet of nature has told us that the recluse may find—

> Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

And I have no doubt that the amiable and interesting student would have been sufficiently charmed with the beauties of external nature, and instructed by her eloquence, had there not been "metal more attractive" in the beautiful being who shared his walks and his friendship.

The lovely Rose Jamieson became his ministering angel; her smile chased away the languor that brooded over his intelligent countenance; her sweet voice quickened his sluggish pulse, and made his heart thrill with an indescribable joy—a heretofore unknown rapture; her sunny glances diffused life, light, and gladness through his whole frame.

> The golden hours on angel wing

flew over them; the summer day became too short for them; their walks became Eden, and their day-dreams Elysium; they loved—fervently—mutually.

Soon as morning gleamed on the mountains, the fond pair were to be seen brushing the dew from the clover, by the banks of the romantic Nith, or climbing the daisied uplands with elastic steps and buoyant hearts—for the mountain air had already renovated the youth's enfeebled frame, and hope had animated his spirits, and given vivacity to his conversation. They expatiated on the beauty and sublimity of the scenery around them—on the power and goodness of the Deity, displayed alike in the creation of the sun in the firmament, and the production of the myriads of wild-flowers which enamelled the green sward beneath their feet. The rushing of the mighty river to a still mightier ocean, and the diamond dew-drop hid in the petal of the half-opened rose; the wide-spreading and venerable oak of a century, and the lowly gowan of yesterday, afforded inexhaustible themes for discussion; and the conclusion which invariably forced itself on their attention, was that of the pious Addison—

> In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
> And utter forth a glorious voice;
> For ever singing, as they shine,
> "The hand that made us is divine."

The summer months glided over the youthful pair imperceptibly; but with returning health, imperative duty impelled the enamoured scholar to resume his studies; to resign the delicious society of her he loved for the musty tome, the midnight lamp, and the emulation approaching hostility, within the time-hallowed walls of Oxford. Already had his trunks been packed, the day of his departure fixed, and his adieus uttered—all but *one*.

They met for this purpose one Sabbath evening in a sequestered glen; the larch and laburnum formed a rude arbour over them, and a nameless streamlet murmured at their feet. The stock-doves uttered mournful cadences, and the plovers over the neighbouring heath sent forth ominous wailings. The early autumnal breeze moaned through the thick foliage, and the rustle of the overhanging leaves gave a dreary response. 'Twas a sad hour; they vowed eternal fidelity—mingled their tears—exchanged Bibles—and parted—he to the crowded haunts of science, she to the solitude of her own little apartment, to brood over the waking dreams of bliss which she had so lately experienced. On opening the little Bible which she had received from the hands of her lover, she found the following text written on the fly-leaf, in a tremulous hand:—"Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," and she could trace, moreover, certain globular stains, the cause of which was not ill to define. "Yes!" she exclaimed, while the tears

started from her large blue eyes, "I will perform all I have vowed to thee, to the very letter. I will love thee as woman never loved—in sorrow and in sickness, in poverty and in exile—nay, in death itself I will love thee; neither shall the influence of wealth, rank, talent, manly beauty, nor shall the authority, which preponderates more than all these together, even that of my only parent, ever alienate my affections from thee, thou chosen of my heart!"

At this moment the door was opened, and her father stood before her. A harsh expression pervaded his rigid countenance; there was a stern inflexibility in his eye, and his lip quivered with emotion; he held his staff with a convulsive grasp, and his whole frame trembled with conflicting passions.

"Daughter," said he, in a tremulous and hollow voice, "daughter, I had indeed suspected that the corbie was attempting to gain the dove's nest—that the descendant of the malignant, with malicious wile, was endeavouring to secure an interest in thine affections, and bitterly do I rue that I did not put a stop to it sooner. But little did I think that thou, the child of my love, the only daughter of thy sainted mother, whom I have cherished like the apple of mine eye, wouldst have so far forgotten thy duty as to vow love and obedience to a scion of an abjured prelatical stock, against whom thy father and thy father's fathers have lifted up their testimony, since the glorious carved work of the sanctuary has been defaced by their unhallowed hands. Did they not shed the blood of the saints in torrents? Were they not butchered in the face of the sun, and in cold blood? And did not their cries enter—but my blood curdles to enumerate the half of their enormities, and I shall therefore refrain from adverting to branding, mutilation, fine, imprisonment, exile, and death. Daughter," said he, in a sepulchral voice, "thou must break off all intercourse and connection with this young man instantly; between us there is an impassable gulf. And if thou perseverest in thine ill-starred choice; if thou art disobedient to thy hoary-headed father; if thou cherish his image in thy bosom, or even at some future period, when I am gathered to my fathers, become his wife, I shall bequeath thee my malison for thy dowry, and my ban for thine inheritance."

So saying, he flung himself out of the chamber in a paroxysm of rage. His beauteous daughter, meanwhile, had become inanimate on the couch. The usual remedies in these cases were promptly resorted to; and after a short interval, she opened her eyes, but it was only to gaze on vacancy. The "silver cord was loosed, and the golden bow was broken." Her reason had fled, and never returned. In one month she was where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. Her father, though he deemed he had only done an imperative duty, could not withstand the shock. Nature sunk beneath the unlooked-for calamity; he mourned, and he *would not* be comforted. In a few weeks he breathed his last; and another tenant was added to the house appointed for all living.

But who may paint the misery of the unhappy youth when he learnt the harrowing intelligence? Sorrow is sacred, and we shall not enter into its detail. Suffice it to say, that he gave up his studies, returned to his native vale with a broken heart; and in the words of his celebrated countryman (who no doubt had the pair in his mind's eye when he penned the touchingly simple ballad), he is reported to have said—

Low there thou lies, my lassie,
Low there thou lies;
A bonnier form ne'er went to the yird,
Nor frae it will arise!

There's nought but dust now mine, lassie,
There's nought but dust now mine;
My soul's with thee in the cauld, cauld grave,
And why should I stay behin'?

A NIGHT AT THE HERRING FISHING.

By Hugh Miller.

In the latter end of August 1819, I went out to the fishing then prosecuted on Guilliam in a Cromarty boat. The evening was remarkably pleasant. A low breeze from the west scarcely ruffled the surface of the frith, which was varied in every direction by unequal stripes and patches of a dead calmness. The bay of Cromarty, burnished by the rays of the declining sun until it glowed like a sheet of molten fire, lay behind, winding in all its beauty beneath purple hills and jutting headlands; while before stretched the wide extent of the Moray Frith, speckled with fleets of boats which had lately left their several ports, and were now all sailing in one direction. The point to which they were bound was the bank of Guilliam, which, seen from betwixt the Sutors, seemed to verge on the faint blue line of the horizon; and the fleets which had already arrived on it had, to the naked eye, the appearance of a little rough-edged cloud resting on the water. As we advanced, this cloud of boats grew larger and darker; and soon after sunset, when the bank was scarcely a mile distant, it assumed the appearance of a thick leafless wood covering a low brown island.

The tide, before we left the shore, had risen high on the beach, and was now beginning to recede. Aware of this, we lowered sail several hundred yards to the south of the fishing ground; and after determining the point from whence the course of the current would drift us direct over the bank, we took down the mast, cleared the hinder part of the boat, and began to cast out the nets. Before the Inlaw appeared in the line of the Gaelic Chapel (the landmark by which the southernmost extremity of Guilliam is ascertained), the whole drift was thrown overboard and made fast to the swing. Night came on. The sky assumed a dead and leaden hue. A low dull mist roughened the outline of the distant hills, and in some places blotted them out from the landscape. The faint breeze that had hitherto scarcely been felt now roughened the water, which was of a dark blue colour, approaching to black. The sounds which predominated were in unison with the scene. The almost measured dash of the waves against the sides of the boat and the faint rustle of the breeze were incessant; while the low dull moan of the surf breaking on the distant beach, and the short sudden cry of an aquatic fowl of the diving species, occasionally mingled with the sweet though rather monotonous notes of a Gaelic song. "It's ane o' the Gairloch fishermen," said our skipper; "puir folk, they're aye singin' an' thinkin' o' the Hielands."

Our boat, as the tides were not powerful, drifted slowly over the bank. The buoys stretched out from the bows in an unbroken line. There was no sign of fish, and the boatmen, after spreading the sail over the beams, laid themselves down on it. The scene was at the time so new to me, and, though of a somewhat melancholy cast, so pleasing, that I stayed up. A singular appearance attracted my notice. "How," said I to one of the boatmen, who a moment before had made me an offer of his greatcoat, "how do you account for that calm silvery spot on the water, which moves at such a rate in the line of our drift?" He started up. A moment after he called on the others to rise, and then replied, "That moving speck of calm water covers a shoal of herrings. If it advances a hundred

yards farther in that direction, we shall have some employment for you." This piece of information made me regard the little patch, which, from the light it caught, and the blackness of the surrounding water, seemed a bright opening in a dark sky, with considerable interest. It moved onward with increased velocity. It came in contact with the line of the drift, and three of the buoys immediately sunk. A few minutes were suffered to elapse, and we then commenced hauling. The two strongest of the crew, as is usual, were stationed at the cork, the two others at the ground baulk. My assistance, which I readily tendered, was pronounced unnecessary, so I hung over the gunwale watching the nets as they approached the side of the boat. The three first, from the phosphoric light of the water, appeared as if bursting into flames of a pale green colour. The fourth was still brighter, and glittered through the waves while it was yet several fathoms away, reminding me of an intensely bright sheet of the aurora borealis. As it approached the side, the pale green of the phosphoric matter appeared as if mingled with large flakes of snow. It contained a body of fish. "A white horse! a white horse!" exclaimed one of the men at the cork baulk; "lend us a haul." I immediately sprung aft, laid hold on the rope, and commenced hauling. In somewhat less than half an hour we had all the nets on board, and rather more than twelve barrels of herrings.

The night had now become so dark, that we could scarcely discern the boats which lay within gunshot of our own; and we had no means of ascertaining the position of the bank except by sounding. The lead was cast, and soon after the nets shot a second time. The skipper's bottle was next produced, and a dram of whisky sent round in a tin measure containing nearly a gill. We then folded down the sail, which had been rolled up to make way for the herrings, and were soon fast asleep.

Ten years have elapsed since I laid myself down on this couch, and I was not then so accustomed to a rough bed as I am now, when I can look back on my wanderings as a journeyman mason over a considerable part of both the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland. About midnight I awoke quite chill, and all over sore with the hard beams and sharp rivets of the boat. Well, thought I, this is the tax I pay for my curiosity. I rose and crept softly over the sail to the bows, where I stood, and where, in the singular beauty of the scene, which was of a character as different from that I had lately witnessed as is possible to conceive, I soon lost all sense of every feeling that was not pleasure. The breeze had died into a perfect calm. The heavens were glowing with stars, and the sea, from the smoothness of the surface, appeared a second sky, as bright and starry as the other, but with this difference, that all its stars appeared comets. There seemed no line of division at the horizon, which rendered the allusion more striking. The distant hills appeared a chain of dark thundery clouds sleeping in the heavens. In short, the scene was one of the strangest I ever witnessed; and the thoughts and imaginations which it suggested were of a character as singular. I looked at the boat as it appeared in the dim light of midnight, a dark irregularly-shaped mass; I gazed on the sky of stars above, and the sky of comets below, and imagined myself in the centre of space, far removed from the earth and every other world—the solitary inhabitant of a planetary fragment. This allusion, too romantic to be lasting, was dissipated by an incident which convinced me that I had not yet left the world. A crew of south shore fishermen, either by accident or design, had shot their nets right across those of another boat, and, in disentangling them, a quarrel ensued.

Our boat lay more than half a mile from the scene of contention, but I could hear, without being particularly attentive, that on the one side there were terrible threats of violence, immediate and bloody; and on the other, threats of the still more terrible pains and penalties of the law. In a few minutes, however, the entangled nets were freed, and the roar of altercation gradually sunk into a silence as dead as that which had preceded it.

An hour before sunrise, I was somewhat disheartened to find the view on every side bounded by a dense low bank of fog, which hung over the water, while the central firmament remained blue and cloudless. The neighbouring boats appeared through the mist huge misshapen things, manned by giants. We commenced hauling, and found in one of the nets a small rock-cod and a half-starved whiting, which proved the whole of our draught. I was informed by the fishermen, that even when the shoal is thickest on the Guilliam, so close does it keep by the bank, that not a solitary herring is to be caught a gunshot from the edge on either side.

We rowed up to the other boats, few of whom had been more successful in their last haul than ourselves, and none equally so in their first. The mist prevented us from ascertaining, by known landmarks, the position of the bank, which we at length discovered in a manner that displayed much of the peculiar art of the fisherman. The depth of the water, and the nature of the bottom, showed us that it lay to the south. A faint tremulous heave of the sea, which was still calm, was the only remaining vestige of the gale which had blown from the west in the early part of the night, and this heave, together with the current, which at this stage of the flood runs in a south-western direction, served as our compass. We next premised how far our boat had drifted down the frith with the ebb-tide, and how far she had been carried back again by the flood. We then turned her bows in the line of the current, and in rather less than half an hour were, as the lead informed us, on the eastern extremity of Guilliam, where we shot our nets for the third time.

Soon after sunrise the mist began to dissipate, and the surface of the water to appear for miles around roughened as if by a smart breeze, though there was not the slightest breath of wind at the time. "How do you account for that appearance?" said I to one of the fishermen. "Ah, lad, that is by no means so favourable a token as the one you asked me to explain last night. I had as lief see the *Bhodry-more*." "Why, what does it betoken? and what is the *Bhodry-more?*" "It betokens that the shoal have spawned, and will shortly leave the frith; for when the fish are sick and weighty they never rise to the surface in that way. But have you never heard of the *Bhodry-more?*" I replied in the negative. "Well, but you shall." "Nay," said another of the crew, "leave that for our return; do you not see the herrings playing by thousands round our nets, and not one of the buoys sinking in the water? There is not a single fish swimming so low as the upper baulks of our drift. Shall we not shorten the buoy-ropes, and take off the sinkers?" This did not meet the approbation of the others, one of whom took up a stone, and flung it in the middle of the shoal. The fish immediately disappeared from the surface for several fathoms round. "Ah, there they go!" he exclaimed; "if they go but low enough; four years ago I startled thirty barrels of light fish into my drift just by throwing a stone among them."

The whole frith at this time, so far as the eye could reach, appeared crowded with herrings; and its surface was so broken by them as to remind one of the pool of a waterfall. They leaped by

millions a few inches into the air, and sunk with a hollow plumping noise, somewhat resembling the dull rippling sound of a sudden breeze; while to the eye there was a continual twinkling, which, while it mocked every effort that attempted to examine in detail, showed to the less curious glance like a blue robe sprinkled with silver. But it is not by such comparisons that so singular a scene is to be described so as to be felt. It was one of those which, through the living myriads of creation, testify of the infinite Creator.

About noon we hauled for the third and last time, and found nearly eight barrels of fish. I observed when hauling that the natural heat of the herring is scarcely less than that of quadrupeds or birds; that when alive its sides are shaded by a beautiful crimson colour which it loses when dead; and that when newly brought out of the water, it utters a sharp faint cry somewhat resembling that of a mouse. We had now twenty barrels on board. The *easterly haar*, a sea-breeze so called by fishermen, which in the Moray Frith, during the summer months, and first month of autumn, commonly comes on after ten o'clock A.M., and fails at four o'clock P.M., had now set in. We hoisted our mast and sail, and were soon scudding right before it.

The story of the *Bhodry-more*, which I demanded of the skipper as soon as we had trimmed our sail, proved interesting in no common degree, and was linked with a great many others. The *Bhodry-more** is an active, mischievous fish of the whale species, which has been known to attack and even founder boats. About eight years ago, a very large one passed the town of Cromarty through the middle of the bay, and was seen by many of the townsfolks leaping out of the water in the manner of a salmon, fully to the height of a boat's mast. It appeared about thirty feet in length. This animal may almost be regarded as the mermaid of modern times: for the fishermen deem it to have fully as much of the demon as of the fish. There have been instances of its pursuing a boat under sail for many miles, and even of its leaping over it from side to side. It appears, however, that its habits and appetites are unlike those of the shark; and that the annoyance which it gives the fisherman is out of no desire of making him its prey, but from its predilection for amusement. It seldom meddles with a boat when at anchor, but pursues one under sail, as a kitten would a rolling ball of yarn. The large physalus whale is comparatively a dull, sluggish animal; occasionally, however, it evinces a partiality for the amusements of the *Bhodry-more*. Our skipper said, that when on the Caithness coast, a few years before, an enormous fish of the species kept direct in the wake of his boat for more than a mile, frequently rising so near the stern as to be within reach of the boat-hook. He described the expression of its large goggle eyes as at once frightful and amusing; and so graphic was his narrative that I could almost paint the animal stretching out for more than sixty feet behind the boat, with his black marble-looking skin and cliff-like fins. He at length grew tired of its gambols, and with a sharp fragment of rock struck it between the eyes. It sunk with a sudden plunge, and did not rise for ten minutes after, when it appeared a full mile a-stern. This narrative was but the first of I no not know how many, of a similar cast, which presented to my imagination the *Bhodry-more* whale and hun-fish in every possible point of view. The latter, a voracious formidable animal of the shark species, frequently makes great havoc among the tackle with which cod and haddock are caught. Like the shark, it throws itself on its back when in the act of seizing its prey. The fishermen frequently see it lying motion-

* Properly, perhaps, the musculous whale

less, its white belly glittering through the water, a few fathoms from the boat's side, employed in stripping off every fish from their hooks as the line is drawn over it. This formidable animal is from six to ten feet in length, and formed like the common shark.

One of the boatmen's stories, though somewhat in the Munchausen style, I shall take the liberty of relating. Two Cromarty men, many years ago, were employed on a fine calm day in angling for coal-fish and rock-cod, with rods and hand-lines. Their little skiff rode to a large oblong stone, which served for an anchor, nearly opposite a rocky spire termed the chapel, three miles south of Shandwick. Suddenly the stone was raised from the bottom with a jerk, and the boat began to move. "What can this mean!" exclaimed the elder of the men, pulling in his rod, "we have surely broken loose; but who could have thought that there ran such a current here!" The other, a young daring fellow, John Clark by name, remarked in reply, that the apparent course of the skiff was directly contrary to that of the current. The motion, which was at first gentle, increased to a frightful velocity; the rope a-head was straitened until the very stem cracked; and the sea rose upon either bows into a furrow that nearly overtopped the gunwale. "Old man," said the young fellow, "didst thou ever see the like o' that!" "Guid save us, boy," said the other; "cut, cut the swing." "Na, na, bide a wee first, I manna skaith the rape: didst thou ever see the like o' that!"

In a few minutes, according to the story, they were dragged in this manner nearly two miles, when the motion ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and the skiff rode to the swing as before.

THE TWIN SISTERS.

By Alexander Balfour.

> One of these men is genius to the other;
> And so, of these which is the natural man,
> And which the spirit? Who decyphers them?
> *Shakspeare.*

Emma and Emily Graham were twin daughters of a respectable farmer and cattle-dealer in Perthshire. The girls bore such a striking resemblance to each other, that their mother found it necessary to clothe them in different colours, as the only method by which they could be distinguished. As they grew up, their similarity became, if possible, more perfect; the colour of their eyes and hair had no shade of difference; and, indeed, every feature of their faces, their form and stature, were so exactly alike, that the same distinction of different dresses continued necessary. They had a brother, Edward, about fifteen months younger, who bore as great a likeness to both as they did to each other. When the girls arrived at nine or ten years of age, they gave promise of being rather above the ordinary stature of their sex, with a very considerable share of personal beauty. But it was only in externals that the resemblance was complete; for, although both had excellent dispositions, with a large share of good nature, their minds were in most respects dissimilar.

Emma was sedate and modest, even

to bashfulness; while Emily was so free and lively, that many thought her forward, and her lightheartedness akin to levity. Edward's mind resembled that of his younger sister as closely as his personal appearance. She was all mirth and frolic, and, by changing clothes with her sister, amused, perplexed, and sometimes fretted her parents; in all which Edward delighted to bear a part. At school there was an ample field for these sportive tricks; and the teacher himself was often sadly teased by their playful metamorphoses.

When the sisters completed their seventeenth year, they had more the appearance of grown women than is common at that age; and their resemblance still continued perfect. Their voices, although slightly masculine, were pleasant and musical; and both had the same tone and sound, pitched to the same key. The dispositions which they had exhibited in childhood still seemed to "grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength." In one thing they, however, agreed, which was, that whenever they appeared in public, they dressed perfectly alike, and were frequently amused and delighted with the mistakes produced by the uniformity. To distinguish their clothes, every article belonging to Emma was marked Em. G., and those of Emily with E. G. only.

As Edward grew up, his striking likeness to his sisters continued; even their difference of voice could be distinguished only by a fine and delicate ear; and with this close resemblance he was so highly pleased, that he used every means by which it could be preserved. To add to the perplexity of their friends, Emma would assume more than her usual vivacity, while Emily would put herself under some restraint; although the one was apt to become suddenly grave, and the other relax into lightheartedness. But they were now divided; for Emma went to reside with an aunt, at fifty miles' distance, and there she continued for a considerable time.

Both the girls had been courted occasionally by the young men of their acquaintance; but their hearts had never felt a reciproçal passion. There was, in particular, an old widower, Francis Meldrum, who had become enamoured of Emily; and, as he was rich, her parents anxiously wished to promote the match. But their daughter shrunk from it with the most decided aversion: no repulse, however, could release her from the importunity of his addresses, as he was countenanced and encouraged by her parents.

During the summer, their father was in the practice of going into England with a drove of cattle, sometimes not returning till the approach of harvest. He now departed on his usual excursion; and, soon after, the mother was called away to visit her sick grandmother, from whom the family had considerable expectations. The farm and house were thus left under the charge of Edward and Emily, both willing to do their duty, but both thoughtless, and delighting in frolic; which, now that they were relieved from the surveillance and remonstrances of the sedate Emma, they had a better opportunity of indulging.

There was a fair in Perth, only a few miles distant, and Emily requested her brother to accompany her thither, that they might have at least one day of pleasure. Her proposal was most readily acceded to by Edward; and they departed together. A company of military, part of the —— regiment, were quartered in Perth, under the command of Captain Munro, who had received orders to recruit during his stay. The fair was a good opportunity for that purpose, and the Captain, with his troop, paraded the streets in their best array. From a window in the inn where they were dining, Edward and

his sister saw them pass along the street. Emily had never known what it was to love; but she had a susceptible heart. Her hour was now come, and her lively fancy was enraptured with the fine, martial appearance of the gallant Captain. Little accustomed to reflection, she fell in love at first sight; and unpractised in disguising her feelings, although she did not express her thoughts to her brother, she was at little pains to conceal the impression made on her heart. This he soon perceived, and began to rally her on the subject, when she frankly acknowledged that she thought the officer the most handsome-looking man she had ever seen, expressing an anxious wish to know his rank and name. That information was easily obtained by Edward, in a casual conversation with the waiter, who said he was from the same quarter with Captain Munro, who was the son and heir of a landed gentleman in Aberdeenshire, was unmarried, and a great favourite with the ladies in town. When the couple reached home, Emily's head and heart both full of the handsome Captain, they had a message from her mother, intimating that the old woman was dying, and that she could not return till she saw the result. There was also a letter from their father, requesting Edward to follow him into England with a supply of cattle, as speedily as possible.

Captain Munro had occupied Emily's sleeping and waking thoughts; and she began to wish that an opportunity might occur for her becoming acquainted with him. With her characteristic love of frolic, she formed a plan which promised to facilitate her wishes; and circumstances seemed favourable for its execution, but it required the assistance of her brother for carrying it into effect. It was communicated to Edward; and he, equally rash and imprudent as herself, was prevailed upon to play his part, which was no less than to enlist himself with Captain Munro as a recruit, and trust to his sister relieving him, according to a scheme pointed out by her, and which appeared feasible to Edward. In compliance with the plan which they had concerted, Edward, with a servant, left the farm for the cattle. Having put them on the way, and arranged to rejoin the servant, he rode into Perth, and enlisted with the Captain, receiving a shilling of earnest. Promising to come back next morning to receive his bounty, and be attested, Edward mounted his horse, and pushed forward to England, leaving Emily to settle the business as best she could.

The day when he had promised to return passed away without any appearance of the recruit. Being a fine-looking fellow, the officer was reluctant to loose him; therefore, next morning, he despatched a serjeant, with a party, to inquire after him. On their arrival at the farm, they found only Emily and the servants. The serjeant had seen Edward when he enlisted, and now believed that he saw, in Emily, the same person in disguise; in consequence of which he threatened to carry her before his commanding officer; but, preserving her good humour, she held his threats in defiance, and, for his own sake, requested him to take care what he did. Some of the party had remained in the kitchen, and there learned from the servants, that Emily sometimes assumed her brother's dress; and, they had no doubt, had personated her brother, as a joke on the Captain. Emily now regaled the party with hospitable cheer, and, dismissing them in excellent humour, requested the serjeant to make her compliments to Captain Munro, trusting that he would take better care of his next recruit. The serjeant imparted all this to his superior, together with what the soldiers had heard in the kitchen, from which the officer was persuaded, that either himself or the ser-

jeant had been completely hoaxed, and, determined to investigate the matter fully, both in discharge of his duty, and for the gratification of his curiosity, which had been highly excited, he next morning visited the farm, intending to judge for himself. This was just what Emily wished and expected. She had therefore taken care to inform herself, in a short interview with her brother, of almost every circumstance which had passed between him and the Captain, the relation of which, she trusted, would convince him of her being the recruit. The moment Captain Munro looked at her, he was convinced of her being the identical person he had enlisted, although he still had doubts about her sex; while, at the same time, he felt that he had never seen one of his own with features so fine and delicate. Although Captain Munro was in every respect a gentleman, yet the extraordinary circumstances which had produced this interview, warranted a freedom of manner which, in other cases, he could not have employed, where he was so much a stranger. He therefore now informed Emily, that he was fully convinced of her being the person who had enlisted with him, and also quite satisfied that she now appeared in the habit which belonged to her sex; still, he presumed he had some right to inquire her motive for a step so uncommon, and which she appeared so early to relinquish.

This question, although she had anticipated it, brought deep blushes into Emily's face; and her heart palpitated as she replied, that, although she now regretted having adopted a measure so incompatible with female delicacy, she felt it a duty which she owed to herself, to inform him of her inducement, lest it might be attributed to something still more unbecoming. She then went on to state that she had, for a long time past, been persecuted with the odious addresses of a widower, old enough to be her father, and whom her parents wished her to marry because he was rich; but, although he had been her equal in age, their dispositions were so opposite, that she must have despised him, for he was a miserly, stingy, jealous, and contemptible wretch; and she had availed herself of the absence of her parents to adopt a measure which, she was sure, would, on its coming to his knowledge, have the effect of relieving her from his offensive importunities; and, although she now saw the imprudent folly she had committed, her regret would be diminished, if it produced the consequences she so anxiously wished.

The part she was now acting, and the situation in which she had placed herself, in spite of all Emily's natural forwardness, called forth that modest timidity which still adds to the loveliness of a young and beautiful woman, suffusing her cheeks with crimson, and softening the brightness of her sparkling eye. Altogether, her appearance and behaviour made a powerful impression on the heart of the gallant soldier; and he contrived to protract the interview till the latest period that good breeding permitted. When Emily offered to return the shilling which her brother had received, the Captain refused it, saying, with a smile, that he had not yet renounced his claim on her, but reserved it for further investigation, for the discussion of which he proposed repeating his visit.

With self-possession, but becoming modesty, Emily replied, that although she had already overstepped the bounds of female decorum, she was neither ignorant of, nor indifferent to, that propriety of conduct which her situation required; and would therefore request, that if he was again inclined to visit the farm of Greenbraes, it might be after the return of her parents. The Captain now left Emily, nearly as much fascinated with her as she had been with his

first appearance; while the respectful propriety of his behaviour, in a case where some freedom of speech might have been excusable, raised him in her estimation; and she flattered herself that he had not seen her with indifference.

The Captain was now impatient for the return of her parents; as, afraid of incurring the displeasure of Emily, he could not venture to visit Greenbraes till that time; but he, oftener than once, threw himself in the way by walking in the vicinity, hoping to meet her whom he now found it impossible to forget. Emily had seen him sauntering in the fields, and rightly conjectured his purpose; but she, actuated, no doubt, partly by a little coquetry, had uniformly disappointed him.

Her father now returned from England; and Emily, who had never before disguised her actions, convinced that her parent must soon hear, from some officious friend, what had already made much noise in the place, resolved to tell as much of the truth as suited her purpose. She therefore informed her father that Edward, in a frolic, had enlisted; but that she had sent him out of the way, and represented him when the Captain came to claim his recruit, and that officer had laughed heartily at the joke.

"Ah, Emily! you are a light-hearted, and lighter-headed lassie," said the fond father. "You carry things ower far; and I'm fleyed ye'll tine your ain character, or render it no worth the keeping. What will Francie Meldrum say to that business? I'll think shame to see him."

"My dear father, if naebody's angry but Francie, I'll never rue doing that for my brother. Say that *you're* no angry, father, and set my heart at ease." And, looking in her father's face with a timid, but affectionate smile, she laid her arm around his neck, pressing her glowing lip to his bronzed cheek.

"I am angry, you little flattering gipsey; but promise to gie ower thae light-headed pranks, and I'll forgive you for this."

Emily had reason to congratulate herself on this speedy reconciliation with her father, who she saw was in good humour; for, looking from the window, she saw Francis, the object of her detestation, approaching, although he had never tormented her during the absence of her parents. Leaving her father to receive the unwelcome visitor, Emily secreted herself in an adjoining closet, where she could hear every word of the conversation, which soon became more agreeable to her than she had expected; for Francis began to speak of her frolic with an asperity which her father did not think it merited. They came to high words, the result of which was, that the farmer conducted his guest to the door, requesting him never to enter it again till Emily bade him welcome. This was so far beyond Emily's expectations, that her heart bounded with delight; and, had it not been that she must have betrayed her being a listener, she would have rushed in, and, kneeling to her father, thanked him for the deliverance.

The fact was, that her father, on his return from England, had stayed in Perth to deposit some money with his banker, who insisted on his dining with him, as he was to see a few friends that day. Captain Munro happened to be of the party, and, hearing the farmer's name and residence, endeavoured to make himself as agreeable as possible, in which he succeeded admirably. Before parting, he took an opportunity of having a private conversation with the farmer, relating circumstantially what the reader is already acquainted with, as far as consisted with his own knowledge. He concluded by confessing the impression which Emily had made on him, which all that he had since heard concerning her had contri-

buted to deepen; and that her motive for the frolic which had given him the pleasure of knowing her was a sufficient apology; and, as it was obvious she would never consent to marry the widower, he begged the farmer to sanction his addresses, instead of a man whose age certainly rendered the match very unsuitable. For his own character and family he referred him to the banker, under whose roof they were, requesting the pleasure of another interview before he left town.

The honest farmer was rather vexed at the first part of this relation, but the conclusion put him in good humour; and, in a conversation with the banker, he learned that Captain Munro was the son and heir of a landed gentleman in Aberdeenshire, and that the young officer bore a highly respectable character, both as a man and a soldier. The farmer and Captain again met, when the former gave the officer his hearty permission to address his daughter, adding, that as she had several times perplexed him with her harmless tricks, of which the Captain had seen and felt a specimen, he wished this interview to be kept secret, and, when they met at Greenbraes, that they might appear strangers to each other. The Captain approved of the suggestion, esteeming it a good joke; and they parted, both in high spirits.

Emily was highly delighted with the dismissal of the importunate widower; and, just as she was wondering whether the Captain knew that her father had returned, she, one morning, saw him approaching the house.

Although this was by no means a disagreeable discovery, yet, when commanded by her father to join them in the parlour, she entered with a palpitating heart, and her cheeks blushing like a half-blown rose.

The Captain met her with the respectful ease of a gentleman and an old acquaintance, when her father, in rather a severe tone, said, "Emily, you informed me of a joke which you played off upon this gentleman, and gave me to understand it was all settled and forgotten; but I find that is not the case. Captain Munro insists that you received earnest money from him, which you still retain; and, therefore, he is entitled either to your services, or satisfaction for the insult offered to him. What do you say?"

"When Captain Munro explains what he wants, I shall then know how to answer," replied Emily.

"That is easily done, Miss Graham,' replied the Captain. "You engaged to be a soldier for life, and I claim the fulfilment of your agreement—wish you to follow the drum. In a word, dear Emily, I love you, and wish to make you a soldier's wife. When I last had the pleasure of seeing you, I informed you that I reserved my claim for further discussion, and requested permission to visit you, which you very prudently declined till your father's return. He is now present, and I wait your reply. A soldier hates trifling."

"My first engagement with you, Captain, was rash, and I repented," replied Emily. "I am afraid you have imitated my folly, in the present declaration, which you would probably regret on reflection. I shall take time to deliberate; and, when we both know each other better, if you continue in the same mind, I shall then be prepared to reply."

This response, while it did credit to Emily's prudence, was such as gave the suitor every reasonable hope of success; as the expression, "when we know each other better," was sufficiently encouraging to induce him to continue his visits. Love had already done his work with both hearts, and in a short time they perfectly understood each other.

Emily's mother now returned; and, after the necessary preparations, the

wedding-day was appointed, when the Captain was called to Edinburgh, as member of a court-martial, to be held in the Castle. They had known each other but a short time, and both had been so much engrossed with their own affairs, that, although the Captain had heard Emma's name mentioned, he was ignorant of the striking resemblance which she bore to her sister. Emily had also continued unacquainted with the Captain's first interview with her father, till she happened to overhear the latter relating it to her mother, and chuckling over it as a good joke which he and the Captain had played off on Emily. Although not displeased at the imposition practised on her, she resolved, sooner or later, to pay both her father and lover in their own coin; and her fertile invention soon contrived a scheme, in which, if she could engage her sister as a confederate, she trusted to enjoy the pleasure of full retaliation.

A letter had been despatched to Emma, announcing the intended nuptials, and requesting her presence, to officiate as bride's maid on the occasion. This message had, however, been crossed on the road by another from Emma, to the same tune; informing her parents of her intended marriage, two days before that fixed for Emily's wedding, and requesting the same service of her sister which had been expected from her.

This *contretemps* was a disappointment to both; however, a second letter arrived from Emma, congratulating Emily on the approaching event, and intimating that she and her husband intended doing themselves the pleasure of being with them in time to witness the ceremony.

The absence of some important witnesses in the case before the court-martial had prevented its sitting; and a letter arrived from Captain Munro, intimating, that, however much it vexed him, he found it would be impossible for him to be at Greenbraes sooner than the day appointed for their union; and, even then, the hour of his arrival was uncertain, but he hoped to be in time for dinner.

Edward arrived from England on the eve of the wedding-day; and Emma, with her husband, in the morning. After the mutual congratulations among so many friends, Emily took an early opportunity of communicating her intentions, and requesting their assistance; especially as it was the last opportunity she would have of indulging in frolic; as, in a few hours, she should be sworn to love, honour, and obey her husband. Edward was highly delighted with the scheme; and Emma's husband, who loved a joke, prevailed on her to comply with her sister's request, and perform her share in the plot, as explained by Emily; and the striking likeness of the two sisters being still as strong as ever, rendered success almost certain. As a necessary preliminary, it was agreed that the sisters should be dressed exactly alike, in every, the minutest article, except that Emma should wear a *bandeau* of artificial rosebuds, by which she could be at once distinguished from her sister. All this was carried into effect; and, when dressed, the distinction was pointed out to their parents, to prevent, as they said, any ridiculous mistake at the approaching ceremony.

The farmhouse of Greenbraes had, in former times, been the mansion-house of the estate, and still had attached to it an extensive and old-fashioned garden. The house stood on a rising ground, and had a commanding view of the road by which the bridegroom must approach. Emily had every thing ready; and, when she saw him at some distance, she joined her brother, with Emma and her husband, in the garden, where they had been for some time; but, as she passed out, requested her mother to conduct Captain Munro to the garden, on his arrival, contriving

some excuse for leaving him as he entered, as she wished to she him privately.

The party had disposed themselves in order, waiting his approach; and, when they heard the garden-door open, Edward and Emily withdrew, secreting themselves in a thicket of evergreens; and the Captain entering, beheld Emma and her husband sauntering most lovingly, at a little distance before him. They did not seem to observe the bridegroom; but, on turning the corner of a new-clipped yew-hedge, Emma, as if by accident, dropped her handkerchief, and the next moment they were out of sight. Captain Munro believed at first glance that it was Emily he had seen, but still was reluctant to suppose it possible that she would permit any other man to use the freedom he had just witnessed; and endeavoured to persuade himself that the lady must be a stranger, invited to the wedding. However, the handkerchief seemed a probable clue to solve his doubts; he approached, took it up, and found it marked Em. G. In no very pleasant mood, he stepped forward a little farther, when he heard a soft whisper, which he knew proceeded from a rustic bower; and he was aware that, by a slight circuit, he could discover the occupants without being seen. He now saw, as he believed, Emily seated in the bower, her head leaning on the shoulder of a handsome-looking young man, whose arm encircled her waist. Rage and jealousy now took possession of the bridegroom's soul, and he was at first disposed to leave the farm, without speaking to any one, but, standing for a few minutes in a stupor, he determined to see the face of him for whom he had been so cruelly deceived. He therefore walked up in front of the bower, and, with all the calm respect which he could assume, said, "Madam, permit me to present your handkerchief, which you dropped in the walk."

"I thank you, Sir," replied Emma; "may I inquire to whom I am indebted for restoring it to its owner?"

The cool composure with which this question was put, raised the indignation of the maddened bridegroom to its highest pitch; and, with a glance of the most sovereign contempt which he could assume, he replied, "To one, madam, who despises you from his soul, and thanks God for his timely discovery of your infamy!"

Her husband now started to his feet, and said, "Sir, you bear the insignia, although you want the manners of a gentleman. But were you of the blood-royal, you should not insult my wife with impunity."

Captain Munro started at the word, and repeated, "Wife! did you say, Sir? Permit me to ask one question, to which your candid reply will oblige me. How long has that woman been your wife?"

"For these two days."

"Enough. Farewell for ever! infamous woman!"

Edward now sprung from the thicket, and standing right before the Captain, in the exact costume in which he had enlisted, said, with an arch and good-humoured smile, "My honoured Captain, excuse the freedom of your recruit. I cannot patiently hear those opprobrious epithets applied to my sister; perhaps she could explain all this if you had patience."

The Captain was now fairly bewildered, and stood staring, first at the one, and then the other, in half-frantic amazement, when, to his relief, the farmer approached; and, seeing the four looking in gloomy silence on each other, exclaimed, "Why, what is the matter with all of you, that you stare as if bewitched?"

Captain Munro, recovering himself a little, replied, "It is even so, Sir; and you are come in time to remove the spell. Say, who are these before you?"

The farmer surveyed the group, and

observing that Emma had not the *bandeau* of rose-buds by which she was to be distinguished from her sister, replied: "Captain, what do you mean? The young man is my son Edward; the other is Dr Malcolm, my son-in-law: you surely do not require to be told that the female is *my* daughter, and *your* bride."

"She is no bride of mine—I renounce her for ever!" said the angry soldier, in a most indignant tone.

While the farmer stood, as much amazed as the Captain had been, Emily came forward from the thicket, and, standing close beside her sister, said, "Dear father, let not the gentlemen quarrel; you have certainly a daughter for each of them; and as both of us are quite willing to have husbands, have the goodness to give our hands to those for whom you intend us;" and both sisters stood with the stillness, gravity, and silence of statues. The astonished father found the distinguishing badge wanting in both, and replied, "I must confess I am fairly bewildered; gentlemen, choose for yourselves, for I cannot!"

Edward now put on Emily's playful smile, and looked at the Captain in a manner which made him at once clasp the youth in his arms, crying, "My dear Emily! I know you now."

The loud laughter of the party again renewed the confusion of the bridegroom and farmer, which was enjoyed for a considerable time before they condescended to give any explanation. It was, however, at last made; all was set right, and the evening passed at Greenbraes in hilarity and unclouded happiness.

ALBERT BANE:

AN INCIDENT OF THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN.

BY HENRY MACKENZIE.

WHEN I was, last autumn, at my friend Colonel Caustic's in the country, I saw there, on a visit to Miss Caustic, a young gentleman and his sister, children of a neighbour of the Colonel's, with whose appearance and manner I was particularly pleased.

The history of their parents, said my friend, is somewhat particular, and I love to tell it, as I do everything that is to the honour of our nature. Man is so poor a thing, taken in the gross, that when I meet with an instance of nobleness in detail, I am fain to rest upon it long, and to recall it often, as in coming thither over our barren hills you would look with double delight on a spot of cultivation or of beauty.

The father of those young folks, whose looks you were struck with, was a gentleman of considerable domains and extensive influence on the northern frontier of our country. In his youth he lived, as it was then more the fashion than it is now, at the seat of his ancestors, surrounded with Gothic grandeur, and compassed with feudal followers and dependants, all of whom could trace their connection at a period more or less remote with the family of their chief. Every domestic in his house bore the family-name, and looked on himself as in a certain degree partaking its dignity, and sharing its fortunes. Of these, one was in a particular manner the favourite of his master. Albert Bane (the surname, you know, is generally lost in a name descriptive of

the individual) had been his companion from his infancy. Of an age so much more advanced as to enable him to be a sort of tutor to his youthful lord, Albert had early taught him the rural exercises and rural amusements, in which himself was eminently skilful; he had attended him in the course of his education at home, of his travels abroad, and was still the constant companion of his excursions, and the associate of his sports.

On one of those latter occasions, a favourite dog of Albert's, whom he had trained himself, and of whose qualities he was proud, happened to mar the sport which his master expected, who, irritated at the disappointment, and having his gun ready cocked in his hand, fired at the animal, which, however, in the hurry of his resentment, he missed. Albert, to whom Oscar was a child, remonstrated against the rashness of the deed in a manner rather too warm for his master, ruffled as he was with the accident, and conscious of being in the wrong, to bear. In his passion he struck his faithful attendant, who suffered the indignity in silence: and retiring, rather in grief than in anger, left his native country that very night; and when he reached the nearest town, enlisted with a recruiting party of a regiment then on foreign service. It was in the beginning of the war with France, which broke out in 1744, rendered remarkable for the rebellion which the policy of the French court excited, in which some of the first families of the Highlands were unfortunately engaged. Among those who joined the standard of Charles, was the master of Albert.

After the battle of Culloden, so fatal to that party, this gentleman, along with others who had escaped the slaughter of the field, sheltered themselves from the rage of the unsparing soldiery among the distant recesses of their country. To him his native mountains offered an asylum; and thither he naturally fled for protection. Acquainted, in the pursuits of the chase, with every secret path and unworn track, he lived for a considerable time, like the deer of his forest, close hid all day, and only venturing down at the fall of evening, to obtain from some of his cottagers, whose fidelity he could trust, a scanty and precarious support. I have often heard him (for he is one of my oldest acquaintances) describe the scene of his hiding-place, at a later period, when he could recollect it in its sublimity, without its horror. "At times," said he, "when I ventured to the edge of the wood, among some of those inacessible crags which you remember a few miles from my house, I have heard, in the pauses of the breeze which rolled solemn through the pines beneath me, the distant voices of the soldiers, shouting in answer to one another amidst their inhuman search. I have heard their shouts re-echoed from cliff to cliff, and seen reflected from the deep still lake below the gleam of those fires which consumed the cottages of my people. Sometimes shame and indignation wellnigh overcame my fear, and I have prepared to rush down the steep, unarmed as I was, and to die at once by the swords of my enemies; but the instinctive love of life prevailed, and starting, as the roe bounded by me, I have again shrunk back to the shelter I had left.

"One day," continued he, "the noise was nearer than usual; and at last, from the cave in which I lay, I heard the parties immediately below so close upon me, that I could distinguish the words they spoke. After some time of horrible suspense, the voices grew weaker and more distant; and at last I heard them die away at the further end of the wood. I rose and stole to the mouth of the cave, when suddenly a dog met me, and gave that short quick bark by which they indicate their prey. Amidst the terror of the circumstance, I was yet

master enough of myself to discover that the dog was Oscar; and I own to you I felt his appearance like the retribution of justice and of heaven. 'Stand!' cried a threatening voice, and a soldier pressed through the thicket, with his bayonet charged. It was Albert! Shame, confusion, and remorse stopped my utterance, and I stood motionless before him. 'My master!' said he, with the stifled voice of wonder and of fear, and threw himself at my feet. I had recovered my recollection. You are revenged, said I, and I am your prisoner. 'Revenged! Alas! you have judged too harshly of me; I have not had one happy day since that fatal one on which I left my master; but I have lived, I hope, to save him. The party to which I belong are passed; for I lingered behind them among those woods and rocks, which I remember so well in happier days. There is, however, no time to be lost. In a few hours this wood will blaze, though they do not suspect that it shelters you. Take my dress, which may help your escape, and I will endeavour to dispose of yours. On the coast, to the westward, we have learned there is a small party of your friends, which, by following the river's track till dusk, and then striking over the shoulder of the hill, you may join without much danger of discovery.' I felt the disgrace of owing so much to him I had injured, and remonstrated against exposing him to such imminent danger of its being known that he favoured my escape, which, from the temper of his commander, I knew would be instant death. Albert, in an agony of fear and distress, besought me to think only of my own safety. 'Save us both,' said he, 'for if you die, I cannot live. Perhaps we may meet again; but whatever comes of Albert, may the blessing of God be with his master!'"

Albert's prayer was heard. His master, by the exercise of talents which, though he had always possessed, adversity only taught him to use, acquired abroad a station of equal honour and emolument; and when the proscriptions of party had ceased, returned home to his own country, where he found Albert advanced to the ranks of a lieutenant in the army, to which his valour and merit had raised him, married to a lady, by whom he had got some little fortune, and the father of an only daughter, for whom nature had done much, and to whose native endowments it was the chief study and delight of her parents to add everything that art could bestow. The gratitude of the chief was only equalled by the happiness of his follower, whose honest pride was not long after gratified by his daughter becoming the wife of that master whom his generous fidelity had saved. That master, by the clemency of more indulgent and liberal times, was again restored to the domains of his ancestors, and had the satisfaction of seeing the grandson of Albert enjoy the hereditary birthright of his race. I accompanied Colonel Caustic on a visit to this gentleman's house, and was delighted to observe his grateful attention to his father-in-law, as well as the unassuming happiness of the good old man, conscious of the perfect reward which his former fidelity had met with. Nor did it escape my notice, that the sweet boy and girl, who had been our guests at the Colonel's, had a favourite brown and white spaniel, whom they caressed much after dinner, whose name was Oscar.

THE PENNY-WEDDING.

By Alex. Campbell.

If any of our readers have ever seen a Scottish penny-wedding, they will agree with us, we daresay, that it is a very merry affair, and that its mirth and hilarity is not a whit the worse for its being, as it genefally is, very homely and unsophisticated. The penny-wedding is not quite so splendid an affair as a ball at Almack's; but, from all we have heard and read of these aristocratic exhibitions, we for our own parts would have little hesitation about our preference, and what is more, we are quite willing to accept the imputation of having a horrid bad taste.

It is very well known to those who know anything at all of penny-weddings, that, when a farmer's servant is about to be married—such an occurrence being the usual, or, at least, the most frequent occasion of these festivities—all the neighbouring farmers, with their servants, and sometimes their sons and daughters, are invited to the ceremony; and to those who know this, it is also known that the farmers so invited are in the habit of contributing each something to the general stock of good things provided for the entertainment of the wedding guests — some sending one thing and some another, till materials are accumulated for a feast, which, both for quantity and quality, would extort praise from Dr Kitchener himself, than whom no man ever knew better what good living was. To all this a little money is added by the parties present, to enable the young couple to *plenish* their little domicile.

Having given this brief sketch of what is called a penny-wedding, we proceed to say that such a merry doing as this took place, as it had done a thousand times before, in a certain parish (we dare not be more particular) in the south of Scotland, about five-and-twenty years ago. The parties — we name them, although it is of no consequence to our story — were Andrew Jardine and Margaret Laird, both servants to a respectable farmer in that part of the country of the name of Harrison, and both very deserving and well-doing persons.

On the wedding-day being fixed, Andrew went himself to engage the services of blind Willie Hodge, the parish fiddler, as he might with all propriety be called, for the happy occasion; and Willie very readily agreed to attend gratuitously, adding, that he would bring his best fiddle along with him, together with an ample supply of fiddle-strings and rosin.

"An' a wee bit box o' elbow grease, Willie," said Andrew, slily; "for ye'll hae gude aught hours o't, at the very least."

"I'll be sure to bring that too, Andrew," replied Willie, laughing; "but it's no aught hours that'll ding me, I warrant. I hae played saxteen without stoppin, except to rosit."

"And to weet your whistle," slipped in Andrew.

"Pho, that wasna worth coontin. It was just a mouthfu' and at it again," said Willie. "I just tak, Andrew," he went on, "precisely the time o' a demisemiquaver to a tumbler o' cauld liquor, such as porter or ale; and twa minims or four crochets to a tumbler o' het drink, such as toddy; for the first, ye see, I can tak aff at jig time, but the other can only get through wi' at the rate o' 'Roslin Castle,' or the 'Dead March in Saul,' especially when its brought to me scadding het, whilk sude never be done to a fiddler."

Now, as to this very nice chromatic measurement by Willie, of the time consumed in his potations, while in the exercise of his calling, we have nothing to say. It may be perfectly correct for aught we know; but when Willie said that he played at one sitting, and with only the stoppages he mentioned, for sixteen hours, we rather think he was drawing fully a longer bow than that he usually played with. At all events, this we know, that Willie was a very indifferent, if not positively a very bad fiddler; but he was a good-humoured creature, harmless and inoffensive, and, moreover, the only one of his calling in the parish, so that he was fully as much indebted to the necessities of his customers for the employment he obtained, as to their love or charity.

The happy day which was to see the humble destinies of Andrew Jardine and Margaret Laird united having arrived, Willie attired himself in his best, popped his best fiddle—which was, after all, but a very sober article, having no more tone than a salt-box—into a green bag, slipped the instrument thus secured beneath the back of his coat, and proceeded towards the scene of his impending labours. This was a large barn, which had been carefully swept and levelled for the "light fantastic *toes*" of some score of ploughmen and dairymaids, not formed exactly after the Chinese fashion. At the further end of the barn stood a sort of platform, erected on a couple of empty herring-barrels; and on this again a chair was placed. This distinguished situation, we need hardly say, was designed for Willie, who from that elevated position was to pour down his heel-inspiring strains amongst the revellers below. When Willie, however, came first upon the ground, the marriage party had not yet arrived. They were still at the manse, which was hard by, but were every minute expected. In these circumstances, and it being a fine summer afternoon, Willie seated himself on a stone at the door, drew forth his fiddle, and struck up with great vigour and animation, to the infinite delight of some half-dozen of the wedding guests, who, not having gone with the others to the manse, were now, like himself, waiting their arrival. These immediately commenced footing it to Willie's music on the green before the door, and thus presented a very appropriate prelude to the coming festivities of the evening.

While Willie was thus engaged, an itinerant brother in trade, on the look-out for employment, and who had heard of the wedding, suddenly appeared, and stealing up quietly beside him, modestly undid the mouth of his fiddle-bag, laid the neck of the instrument bare, and drew his thumb carelessly across the strings, to intimate to him that a rival was near his throne. On hearing the sound of the instrument, Willie stopped short.

"I doubt, frien, ye hae come to the wrang market," he said, guessing at once the object of the stranger. "An' ye hae been travellin too, I daresay?" he continued, good-naturedly, and not at all offended with the intruder, for whom and all of his kind he entertained a fellow feeling.

"Ay," replied the new Orpheus, who was a tall, good-looking man of about eight-and-twenty years of age, but very poorly attired, "I hae been travellin, as ye say, neebor, an' hae came twa or three miles out o' my way to see if I could pick up a shilling or twa at this weddin."

"I am sorry now, man, for that," said Willie, sympathisingly. "I doot ye'll be disappointed, for I hae been engaged for't this fortnight past. But I'll tell ye what: if ye're onything guid o' the fiddle, ye may remain, jist to relieve me now an' then, an' I'll mind ye when a's ower; an' at ony rate ye'll aye pick up a mouthfu' o' guid meat and

drink—an' that ye ken's no to be fand at every dyke-side."

"A bargain be't," said the stranger, "an' much obliged to you, frien. I maun just tak pat-luck and be thankfu. But isna your waddin folks lang o' comin?" he added.

"They'll be here belyve," replied Willie, and added, "Ye'll no be blin, frien?"

"Ou, no," said the stranger; "thank goodness I hae my sight; but I am otherwise in such a bad state o' health, that I canna work, and am obliged to tak the fiddle for a subsistence."

While this conversation was going on, the wedding folks were seen dropping out of the manse in twos and threes, and making straight for the scene of the evening's festivities, where they all very soon after assembled. Ample justice having been done to all the good things that were now set before the merry party, and Willie and his colleague having had their share, and being thus put in excellent trim for entering on their labours, the place was cleared of all encumbrances, and a fair and open field left for the dancers. At this stage of the proceedings, Willie was led by his colleague to his station, and helped up to the elevated chair which had been provided for him, when the latter handed him his instrument, while he himself took up his position, fiddle in hand, on his principal's left, but standing on the ground, as there was no room for him on the platform.

Everything being now ready, and the expectant couples ranged in their respective places on the floor, Willie was called upon to begin, an order which he instantly obeyed by opening in great style.

On the conclusion of the first reel, in the musical department of which the strange fiddler had not interfered, the latter whispered to his coadjutor, that if he liked he would relieve him for the next.

"Weel," replied the latter, "if ye think ye can gae through wi't onything decently, ye may try your hand."

"I'll no promise much," said the stranger, now for the first time drawing his fiddle out of its bag; "but, for the credit o' the craft, I'll do the best I can."

Having said this, Willie's colleague drew his bow across the strings of his fiddle, with a preparatory flourish, when instantly every face in the apartment was turned towards him with an expression of delight and surprise. The tones of the fiddle were so immeasurably superior to those of poor Willie's salt-box, that the dullest and most indiscriminating ear amongst the revellers readily distinguished the amazing difference. But infinitely greater still was their surprise and delight when the stranger began to play. Nothing could exceed the energy, accuracy, and beauty of his performances. He was, in short, evidently a perfect master of the instrument, and this was instantly perceived and acknowledged by all, including Willie himself, who declared, with great candour and goodwill, that he had never heard a better fiddler in his life.

The result of this discovery was, that the former was not allowed to lift a bow during the remainder of the night, the whole burden of its labours being deposited on the shoulders, or perhaps we should rather say the finger-ends, of the stranger, who fiddled away with an apparently invincible elbow.

For several hours the dance went on without interruption, and without any apparent abatement whatever of vigour on the part of the performers; but, at the end of this period, some symptoms of exhaustion began to manifest themselves, which were at length fully declared by a temporary cessation of both the mirth and music.

It was at this interval in the revelries that the unknown fiddler, who had

been, by the unanimous voice of the party, installed in Willie's elevated chair, while the latter was reduced to his place on the floor, stretching himself over the platform, and tapping Willie on the hat with his bow, to draw his attention, inquired of him, in a whisper, if he knew who the lively little girl was that had been one of the partners in the last reel that had been danced.

"Is she a bit red-cheeked, dark-ee'd, and dark-haired lassie, about nineteen or twenty?" inquired Willie, in his turn.

"The same," replied the fiddler.

"Ou, that's Jeanie Harrison," said Willie, "a kind-hearted, nice bit lassie. No a better nor a bonnier in a' the parish. She's a dochter o' Mr Harrison o' Todshaws, the young couple's maister, an' a very respectable man. He's here himsel, too, amang the lave."

"Just so," replied his colleague. And he began to rosin his bow, and to screw his pegs anew, to prepare for the second storm of merriment, which he saw gathering, and threatening to burst upon him with increased fury. Amongst the first on the floor was Jeanie Harrison.

"Is there naebody'll tak me out for a reel?" exclaimed the lively girl; and without waiting for an answer, "Weel, then, I'll hae the fiddler." And she ran towards the platform on which the unknown performer was seated. But he did not wait her coming. He had heard her name her choice, laid down his fiddle, and sprang to the floor with the agility of a harlequin, exclaiming, "Thank ye, my bonny lassie, thank ye for the honour. I'm your man at a moment's notice, either for feet or fiddle."

It is not quite certain that Jeanie was in perfect earnest when she made choice of the musician for a partner, but it was now too late to retract, for the joke had taken with the company, and, with one voice, or rather shout, they insisted on her keeping faithful to her engagement, and dancing a reel with the fiddler; and on this no one insisted more stoutly than the fiddler himself. Finding that she could do no better, the good-natured girl put the best face on the frolic she could, and prepared to do her partner every justice in the dance. Willie having now taken bow in hand, his colleague gave him the word of command, and away the dancers went like meteors; and here again the surprise of the party was greatly excited by the performances of our friend the fiddler, who danced as well as he played. To say merely that he far surpassed all in the room would not, perhaps, be saying much; for there were none of them very great adepts in the art. But, in truth, he danced with singular grace and lightness, and much did those who witnessed it marvel at the display. Neither was his bow to his partner, nor his manner of conducting her to her seat on the conclusion of the reel, less remarkable. It was distinguished by an air of refined gallantry certainly not often to be met with in those in his humble station in life. He might have been a master of ceremonies; and where the beggarly-looking fiddler had picked up these accomplishments every one found it difficult to conjecture.

On the termination of the dance, the fiddler—as we shall call him, *par excellence*, and to distinguish him from Willie—resumed his seat and his fiddle, and began to drive away with even more than his former spirit; but it was observed by more than one that his eye was now almost constantly fixed, for the remainder of the evening, as, indeed, it had been very frequently before, on his late partner, Jeanie Harrison. This circumstance, however, did not prevent him giving every satisfaction to those who danced to his music, nor did it in the least impair the spirit of his performances; for he was evidently too much practised in the use of the instrument,

which he managed with such consummate skill, to be put out, either by the contemplation of any chance object which might present itself, or by the vagaries of his imagination.

Leaving our musician in the discharge of his duty, we shall step over to where Jeanie Harrison is seated, to learn what she thinks of her partner, and what the Misses Murray, the daughters of a neighbouring farmer, between whom she sat, think of him, and of Jeanie having danced with a fiddler.

Premising that the Misses Murray, not being by any means beauties themselves, entertained a very reasonable and justifiable dislike and jealousy of all their own sex to whom nature had been more bountiful in this particular; and finding, moreover, that, from their excessively bad tempers (this, however, of course, not admitted by the ladies themselves), they could neither practise nor share in the amenities which usually mark the intercourse of the sexes, they had set up for connoisseurs in the articles of propriety and decorum, of which they professed to be profound judges—premising this, then, we proceed to quote the conversation that passed between the three ladies—that is, the Misses Murray and Miss Harrison; the latter taking her seat between them after dancing with the fiddler.

"My certy!" exclaimed the elder, with a very dignified toss of the head, "ye warna nice, Jeanie, to dance wi' a fiddler. I wad hae been very ill aff, indeed, for a partner before I wad hae taen up wi' such a ragamuffin."

"An' to go an' ask him too!" said the younger, with an imitative toss. "I wadna ask the best man in the land to dance wi' me, let alane a fiddler! If they dinna choose to come o' their ain accord, they may stay."

"Tuts, lassies, it was a' a piece o' fun," said the good-humoured girl. "I'm sure everybody saw that but yersels. Besides, the man's well aneugh—na, a gude deal mair than that, if he was only a wee better clad. There's no a better-lookin man in the room; and I wish, lassies," she added, "ye may get as guid dancers in your partners—that's a'."

"Umph! a bonny like taste ye hae, Jeanie, an' a very strange notion o' propriety!" exclaimed the elder, with another toss of the head.

"To dance wi' a fiddler!" simpered out the younger—who, by the way, was no chicken either, being but a trifle on the right side of thirty.

"Ay, to be sure, dance wi' a fiddler or a piper either. I'll dance wi' baith o' them—an' what for no?" replied Jeanie. "There's neither sin nor shame in't; and I'll dance wi' him again, if he'll only but ask me."

"An' faith he'll do that wi' a' the pleasure in the warld, my bonny lassie," quoth the intrepid fiddler, leaping down once more from his high place; for, there having been a cessation of both music and dancing while the conversation above recorded was going on, he had heard every word of it. "Wi' a' the pleasure in the warld," he said, advancing towards Jeanie Harrison, and making one of his best bows of invitation; and again a shout of approbation from the company urged Jeanie to accept it, which she readily did, at once to gratify her friends and to provoke the Misses Murray.

Having accordingly taken her place on the floor, and other couples having been mustered for the set, Jeanie's partner again called on Willie to strike up; again the dancers started, and again the fiddler astonished and delighted the company with the grace and elegance of his performances. On this occasion, however, the unknown musician's predilection for his fair partner exhibited a more unequivocal character; and he even ventured to inquire if he might call at her father's, to amuse the family for an hour or so with his fiddle.

"Nae objection in the warld," replied Jeanie. "Come as aften as ye like; and the aftener the better, if ye only bring yer fiddle wi' ye, for we're a' fond o' music."

"A bargain be't," said the gallant fiddler; and, at the conclusion of the reel, he again resumed his place on the platform and his fiddle.

"Time and the hour," says Shakspeare, "will wear through the roughest day;" and so they will, also, through the merriest night, as the joyous party of whom we are speaking now soon found.

Exhaustion and lassitude, though long defied, finally triumphed; and even the very candles seemed wearied of giving light; and, under the influence of these mirth-destroying feelings, the party at length broke up, and all departed, excepting the two fiddlers.

These worthies now adjourned to a public-house, which was close by, and set very gravely about settling what was to them the serious business of the evening. Willie had received thirty-one shillings as payment in full for their united labours; and, in consideration of the large and unexpected portion of them which had fallen to the stranger's share, he generously determined, notwithstanding that he was the principal party, as having been the first engaged, to give him precisely the one-half of the money, or fifteen shillings and sixpence.

"Very fair," said the stranger, on this being announced to him by his brother in trade—very fair; but what would ye think of our drinking the odd sixpences?"

"Wi' a' my heart," replied Willie, "wi' a' my heart. A very guid notion."

And a jug of toddy, to the value of one shilling, was accordingly ordered and produced, over which the two got as thick as ben-leather.

"Ye're a guid fiddler—I'll say that o' ye," quoth Willie, after tossing down the first glass of the warm, exhilarating beverage. "I would never wish to hear a better."

"I have had some practice," said the other modestly, and at the same time following his companion's example with his glass.

"Nae doot, nae doot, sae's seen on your playin," replied the latter. "How do you fend wi' yer fiddle? Do ye mak onything o' a guid leevin o't?"

"No that ill ava," said the stranger. "I play for the auld leddy at the castle—Castle Gowan, ye ken; indeed, I'm sometimes ca'd the leddy's fiddler, and she's uncommon guid to me. I neither want bite nor sowp when I gang there."

"That's sae far weel," replied Willie. "She's a guid judge o' music that Leddy Gowan, as I hear them say; and I'm tauld her son, Sir John, plays a capital bow."

"No amiss, I believe," said the stranger; "but the leddy, as ye say, is an excellent judge o' music, although whiles, I think, rather ower fond o't, for she maks me play for hours thegither, when I wad far rather be wi' Tam Yule, her butler, a sonsy, guid-natured chiel, that's no sweer o' the cap. But, speaking o' that, I'll tell ye what, frien," he continued, "if ye'll come up to Castle Gowan ony day, I'll be blithe to see you, for I'm there at least ance every day, and I'll warrant ye—for ye see I can use every liberty there—in a guid het dinner, an' a jug o' hetter toddy to wash it ower wi'."

"A bargain be't," quoth Willie; "will the morn do?"

"Perfectly," said the stranger; "the sooner the better."

This settled, Willie proceeded to a subject which had been for some time near his heart, but which he felt some delicacy in broaching. This feeling, however, having gradually given way before the influence of the toddy, and of his friend's frank and jovial manner, he at length ventured, though cautiously, to step on the ice.

"That's an uncommon guid instrument o' yours, frien," he said.

"Very good," replied his companion, briefly.

"But ye'll hae mair than that ane, nae doot?" rejoined the other.

"I hae ither twa."

"In that case," said Willie, "maybe ye wad hae nae objection to pairt wi' that ane, an' the price offered ye wur a' the mair temptin. I'll gie ye the fifteen shillins I hae won the nicht, an' my fiddle, for't."

"Thank ye, frien, thank ye for your offer," replied the stranger; "but I daurna accept o't, though I war willin. The fiddle was gien to me by Leddy Gowan, and I daurna pairt wi't. She wad miss't, and then there would be the deevil to pay."

"Oh, an' that's the case," said Willie, "I'll sae nae mair aboot it; but it's a first-rate fiddle—sae guid a ane, that it micht amaist play the lane o't."

It being now very late, or rather early, and the toddy jug emptied, the blind fiddler and his friend parted, on the understanding, however, that the former would visit the latter at the castle (whither he was now going, he said, to seek a night's quarters) on the following day.

True to his appointment, Willie appeared next day at Gowan House, or Castle Gowan, as it was more generally called, and inquired for "the fiddler." His inquiry was met with great civility and politeness by the footman who opened the door. He was told "the fiddler" was there, and desired to walk in. Obeying the invitation, Willie, conducted by the footman, entered a spacious apartment, where he was soon afterwards entertained with a sumptuous dinner, in which his friend the fiddler joined him.

"My word, neighbour," said Willie, after having made a hearty meal of the good things that were set before him, and having drank in proportion, "but ye're in noble quarters here. This is truly fiddlin to some purpose, an' treatin the art as it ought to be treated in the persons o' its professors. But what," he added, "if Sir John should come in upon us? He wadna like maybe a' thegither to see a stranger wi' ye?"

"Deil a bodle I care for Sir John, Willie! He's but a wild harum-scarum throughither chap at the best, an' no muckle to be heeded."

"Ay, he's fond o' a frolic, they tell me," quoth Willie; "an' there's a heap o' gie queer anes laid to his charge, whether they be true or no; but his heart's in the richt place, I'm thinkin, for a' that. I've heard o' mony guid turns he has dune."

"Ou, he's no a bad chiel, on the whole, I daresay," replied Willie's companion. "His bark's waur than his bite—an' that's mair than can be said o' a rat-trap, at ony rate."

It was about this period, and then for the first time, that certain strange and vague suspicions suddenly entered Willie's mind regarding his entertainer. He had remarked that the latter gave his orders with an air of authority which he thought scarcely becoming in one who occupied the humble situation of "the lady's fiddler;" but, singular as this appeared to him, the alacrity and silence with which these orders were obeyed, was to poor Willie still more unaccountable. He said nothing, however; but much did he marvel at the singular good fortune of his brother-in-trade. He had never known a fiddler so quartered before; and, lost in admiration of his friend's felicity, he was about again to express his ideas on the subject, when a servant in splendid livery entered the room, and bowing respectfully, said, "The carriage waits you, Sir John."

"I will be with you presently, Thomas," replied who? inquires the reader.

Why, Willie's companion!

What! is he then Sir John Gowan—he, the fiddler at the penny-wedding,

Sir John Gowan of Castle Gowan, the most extensive proprietor and the wealthiest man in the county?

The same and no other, good reader, we assure thee.

A great lover of frolic, as he himself said, was Sir John; and this was one of the pranks in which he delighted. He was an enthusiastic fiddler; and, as has been already shown, performed with singular skill on that most difficult, but most delightful, of all musical instruments.

We will not attempt to describe poor Willie's amazement and confusion when this singular fact became known to him; for they are indescribable, and therefore better left to the reader's imagination. On recovering a little from his surprise, however, he endeavoured to express his astonishment in such broken sentences as these—"Wha in earth wad hae ever dreamed o't? Rosit an' fiddle-strings! —this beats a'. Faith, a'n I've been fairly taen in—clean dune for. A knight o' the shire to play at a penny-waddin wi' blin Willie Hodge the fiddler! The like was ne'er heard tell o'."

As it is unnecessary, and would certainly be tedious, to protract the scene at this particular point in our story, we cut it short by saying, that Sir John presented Willie with the fiddle he had so much coveted, and which he had vainly endeavoured to purchase; that he then told down to him the half of the proceeds of the previous night's labours which he had pocketed, added a handsome *douceur* from his own purse, and finally dismissed him with a pressing and cordial invitation to visit the castle as often as it suited his inclination and convenience.

Having arrived at this landing-place in our tale, we pause to explain one or two things, which is necessary for the full elucidation of the sequel. With regard to Sir John Gowan himself, there is little to add to what has been already said of him; for, brief though these notices of him are, they contain nearly all that the reader need care to know about him. He was addicted to such pranks as that just recorded; but this, if it was a defect in his character, was the only one. For the rest, he was an excellent young man—kind, generous, and affable; of the strictest honour, and the most upright principles. He was, moreover, an exceedingly handsome man, and highly accomplished. At this period, he was unmarried, and lived with his mother, Lady Gowan, to whom he was most affectionately attached. Sir John had, at one time, mingled a good deal with the fashionable society of the metropolis; but soon became disgusted with the heartlessness of those who composed it, and with the frivolity of their pursuits; and in this frame of mind he came to the resolution of retiring to his estate, and of giving himself up entirely to the quiet enjoyments of a country life, and the pleasing duties which his position as a large landed proprietor entailed upon him.

Simple in all his tastes and habits, Sir John had been unable to discover, in any of the manufactured beauties to whom he had been, from time to time, introduced while he resided in London, one to whom he could think of intrusting his happiness. The wife he desired was one fresh from the hand of nature, not one remodelled by the square and rule of art; and such a one he thought he had found during his adventure of the previous night.

Bringing this digression, which we may liken to an interlude, to a close, we again draw up the curtain, and open the second act of our little drama with an exhibition of the residence of Mr Harrison at Todshaws.

The house or farm-steading of this worthy person was of the very best description of such establishments. The building itself was substantial, nay, even handsome, while the excellent garden which was attached to it, and all the

other accessories and appurtenances with which it was surrounded, indicated wealth and comfort. Its situation was on the summit of a gentle eminence that sloped down in front to a noisy little rivulet, that careered along through a narrow rugged glen overhanging with hazel, till it came nearly opposite the house, where it wound through an open plat of green sward, and shortly after again plunged into another little romantic ravine similar to the one it had left.

The approach to Mr Harrison's house lay along this little rivulet, and was commanded, for a considerable distance, by the view from the former—a circumstance which enabled Jeanie Harrison to descry, one fine summer afternoon, two or three days after the occurrence of the events just related, the approach of the fiddler with whom she had danced at the wedding. On making this discovery, Jeanie ran to announce the joyful intelligence to all the other members of the family, and the prospect of a merry dancing afternoon opened on the delighted eyes of its younger branches.

When the fiddler—with whose identity the reader is now as well acquainted as we are—had reached the bottom of the ascent that led to the house, Jeanie, with excessive joy beaming in her bright and expressive eye, and her cheek glowing with the roseate hues of health, rushed down to meet him, and to welcome him to Todshaws.

"Thank ye, my bonny lassie—thank ye," replied the disguised baronet, expressing himself in character, and speaking the language of his assumed station. "Are ye ready for anither dance?"

"Oh, a score o' them—a thousand o' them," said the lively girl.

"But will your faither, think ye, hae nae objections to my comin?" inquired the fiddler.

"Nane in the warld. My faither is nane o' your sour carles that wad deny ither folk the pleasures they canna enjoy themsels. He likes to see a'body happy around him—every ane his ain way."

"An' your mother?"

"Jist the same. Ye'll find her waur to fiddle doun than ony o' us. She'll dance as lang's a string hauds o't."

"Then, I may be quite at my ease," rejoined Sir John.

"Quite so," replied Jeanie—and she slipped half-a-crown into his hand—"and there's your arles; but ye'll be minded better ere ye leave us."

"My word, no an ill beginnin," quoth the musician, looking with well-affected delight at the coin, and afterwards putting it carefully into his pocket. "But ye could hae gien me a far mair acceptable arles than half-a-crown," he added, "and no been a penny the poorer either."

"What's that?" said Jeanie, laughing and blushing at the same time, and more than half guessing, from the looks of the *pawky* fiddler, what was meant.

"Why, my bonny leddie," he replied, "jist a kiss o' that pretty little mou o' yours."

"Oh, ye gowk!" exclaimed Jeanie, with a roguish glance at her humble gallant; for, disguised as he was, he was not able to conceal a very handsome person, nor the very agreeable expression of a set of remarkably fine features—qualities which did not escape the vigilance of the female eye that was now scanning their possessor. Nor would we say that these qualities were viewed with total indifference, or without producing their effect, even although they did belong to a fiddler.

"Oh, ye gowk!" said Jeanie; "wha ever heard o' a fiddler preferring a kiss to half-a-crown?"

"But *I* do, though," replied the disguised knight; "and I'll gie ye yours back again for't."

"The mair fule you," exclaimed Jeanie, rushing away towards the house, and leaving the fiddler to make

out the remainder of the way by himself.

On reaching the house, the musician was ushered into the kitchen, where a plentiful repast was instantly set before him, by the kind and considerate hospitality of Jeanie, who, not contented with her guest's making a hearty meal at table, insisted on his pocketing certain pieces of cheese, cold meat, &c., which were left. These the fiddler steadily refused; but Jeanie would take no denial, and with her own hands crammed them into his capacious pockets, which, after the operation, stuck out like a well-filled pair of saddle-bags. But there was no need for any one who might be curious to know what they contained, to look into them for that purpose. Certain projecting bones of mutton and beef, which it was found impossible to get altogether out of sight, sufficiently indicated their contents. Of this particular circumstance, however—we mean the projection of the bones from the pockets—we must observe, the owner of the said pockets was not aware, otherwise, we daresay, he would have been a little more positive in rejecting the provender which Jeanie's warmheartedness and benevolence had forced upon him.

Be this as it may, however, so soon as the musician had finished his repast, he took fiddle in hand, and opened the evening with a slow pathetic Scottish air, which he played so exquisitely that Jeanie's eye filled with a tear, as she listened in raptures to the sweet but melancholy turns of the affecting tune.

Twice the musician played over the touching strain, delighted to perceive the effects of the music on the lovely girl who stood before him, and rightly conceiving it to be an unequivocal proof of a susceptible heart and of a generous nature.

A third time he began the beautiful air; but he now accompanied it with a song, and in this accomplishment he was no less perfect than in the others which have been already attributed to him. His voice was at once manly and melodious, and he conducted it with a skill that did it every justice. Having played two or three bars of the tune, his rich and well-regulated voice chimed in with the following words:—

Oh, I hae lived wi' high-bred dames,
Each state of life to prove,
But never till this hour hae met
The girl that I could love.

It's no in fashion's gilded ha's
That she is to be seen;
Beneath her father's humble roof
Abides my bonny Jean.

Oh, wad she deign ae thought to wair,
Ae kindly thought on me,
Wi' pearls I wad deck her hair,
Though low be my degree.

Wi' pearls I wad deck her hair,
Wi' gowd her wrists sae sma';
An' had I lands and houses, she'd
Be leddy ower them a'.

The sun abune's no what he seems,
Nor is the night's fair queen;
Then wha kens wha the minstrel is
That's wooin bonny Jean?

Jeanie could not help feeling a little strange as the minstrel proceeded with a song which seemed to have so close a reference to herself.

She, of course, did not consider this circumstance otherwise than as merely accidental; but she could not help, nevertheless, being somewhat embarrassed by it; and this was made sufficiently evident by the blush that mantled on her cheek, and by the confusion of her manner under the fixed gaze of the singer, while repeating the verses just quoted.

When he had concluded, "Well, good folks all," he said, "what think ye of my song?" And without waiting for an answer, about which he seemed very indifferent, he added, "and how do you like it, Jeanie?" directing the question exclusively to the party he named.

"Very weel," replied Jeanie, again blushing, but still more deeply than

before; "the song is pretty, an' the air delightfu'; but some o' the verses are riddles to me. I dinna' thoroughly understand them."

"Don't you?" replied Sir John, laughing; "then I'll explain them to you by-and-by; but, in the meantime, I must screw my pegs anew, and work for my dinner, for I see the good folk about me here are all impatience to begin." A fact this which was instantly acknowledged by a dozen voices; and straightway the whole party proceeded, in compliance with a suggestion of Mr Harrison, to the green in front of the house, where Sir John took up his position on the top of an inverted wheelbarrow, and immediately commenced his labours.

For several hours the dance went on with uninterrupted glee, old Mr Harrison and his wife appearing to enjoy the sport as much as the youngest of the party, and both being delighted with the masterly playing of the musician. But although, as on a former occasion, Sir John did not suffer anything to interfere with, or interrupt the charge of the duties expected of him, there was but a very small portion of his mind or thoughts engrossed by the employment in which he was engaged. All, or nearly all, were directed to the contemplation of the object on which his affections had now become irrevocably fixed.

Neither was his visit to Todshaws, on this occasion, by any means dictated solely by the frivolous object of affording its inmates entertainment by his musical talents. His purpose was a much more serious one. It was to ascertain, as far as such an opportunity would afford him the means, the dispositions and temper of his fair enslaver. Of these, his natural shrewdness had enabled him to make a pretty correct estimate on the night of the wedding; but he was desirous of seeing her in other circumstances, and he thought none more suitable for his purpose than those of a domestic nature.

It was, then, to see her in this position that he had now come; and the result of his observations was highly gratifying to him.

He found in Miss Harrison all that he, at any rate, desired in woman. He found her guileless, cheerful, gentle, kind-hearted, and good-tempered, beloved by all around her, and returning the affection bestowed on her with a sincere and ardent love.

Such were the discoveries which the disguised baronet made on this occasion; and never did hidden treasure half so much gladden the heart of the fortunate finder, as these did that of him who made them. It is true that Sir John could not be sure, nor was he, that his addresses would be received by Miss Harrison, even after he should have made himself known; but he could not help entertaining a pretty strong confidence in his own powers of persuasion, nor being, consequently, tolerably sanguine of success. All this, however, was to be the work of another day. In the meantime, the dancers having had their hearts' content of capering on the green sward, the fiddle was put up, and the fiddler once more invited into the house, where he was entertained with the same hospitality as before, and another half-crown slipped into his hand. This he also put carefully into his pocket; and having partaken lightly of what was set before him, rose up to depart, alleging that he had a good way to go, and was desirous of availing himself of the little daylight that still remained. He was pressed to remain all night, but this he declined; promising, however, in reply to the urgent entreaties with which he was assailed on all sides to stay, that he would very soon repeat his visit. Miss Harrison he took by the hand, and said, "I promised to explain to you the poetical riddle which I read, or rather attempted

to sing, this evening. It is now too late to do this, for the explanation is a long one; but I will be here again, without fail, in a day or two, when I shall solve all, and, I trust, to your satisfaction. Till then, do not forget your poor fiddler."

"No, I winna forget ye," said Jeanie. "It wadna be easy to forget ane that has contributed so much to our happiness. Neither would it be more than gratefu' to do so, I think."

"And you are too kind a creature to be ungrateful to any one, however humble may be their attempts to win your favour; of that I feel assured." Having said this, and perceiving that he was unobserved, he quickly raised the fair hand he held to his lips, kissed it, and hurried out of the door.

What Jane Harrison thought of this piece of gallantry from a fiddler, we really do not know, and therefore will say nothing about it. Whatever her thoughts were, she kept them to herself. Neither did she mention to any one the circumstance which gave rise to them. Nor did she say, but for what reason we are ignorant, how much she had been pleased with the general manners of the humble musician, with the melodious tones of his voice, and the fine expression of his dark hazel eye. Oh, love, love! thou art a leveller, indeed, else how should it happen that the pretty daughter of a wealthy and respectable yeoman should think for a moment, with certain indescribable feelings, of a poor itinerant fiddler? Mark, good reader, however, we do not say that Miss Harrison was absolutely in love with the musician. By no means. That would certainly be saying too much. But it is as certainly true, that she had perceived something about him that left no disagreeable impression—nay, something which she wished she might meet with in her future husband, whoever he might be.

Leaving Jeanie Harrison to such reflections as these, we will follow the footsteps of the disguised baronet. On leaving the house, he walked at a rapid pace for an hour or so, till he came to a turn in the road, at the distance of about four miles from Todshaws, where his gig and man-servant, with a change of clothes, were waiting him by appointment. Having hastily divested himself of his disguise, and resumed his own dress, he stepped into the vehicle, and about midnight arrived at Castle Gowan.

In this romantic attachment of Sir John Gowan's, or rather in the romantic project which it suggested to him of offering his heart and hand to the daughter of a humble farmer, there was but one doubtful point on his side of the question, at any rate. This was, whether he could obtain the consent of his mother to such a proceeding. She loved him with the utmost tenderness; and, naturally of a mild, gentle, and affectionate disposition, her sole delight lay in promoting the happiness of her beloved son. To secure this great object of her life, there was scarcely any sacrifice which she would not make, nor any proposal with which she would not willingly comply. This Sir John well knew, and fully appreciated; but he felt that the call which he was now about to make on her maternal love was more than he ought to expect she would answer. He, in short, felt that she might, with good reason, and without the slightest infringement of her regard for him, object to his marrying so far beneath his station. It was not, therefore, without some misgivings that he entered his mother's private apartment on the day following his adventure at Todshaws, for the purpose of divulging the secret of his attachment, and hinting at the resolution he had formed regarding it.

"Mother," he said, after a pause which had been preceded by the usual affectionate inquiries of the morning,

"you have often expressed a wish that I would marry."

"I have, John," replied the good old lady. "Nothing in this world would afford me greater gratification than to see you united to a woman who should be every way deserving of you—one with whom you could live happily."

"Ay, that last is the great, the important consideration, at least with me. But where, mother, am I to find that woman? I have mingled a good deal with the higher ranks of society, and there, certainly, I have not been able to find her. I am not so uncharitable as to say—nay, God forbid I should—that there are not as good, as virtuous, as amiable women, in the upper classes of society as in the lower. I have no doubt there are. All that I mean to say is, that I have not been fortunate enough to find one in that sphere to suit my fancy, and have no hopes of ever doing so. Besides, the feelings, sentiments, and dispositions of these persons, both male and female, are so completely disguised by a factitious manner, and by conventional rules, that you never can discover what is their real nature and character. They are still strangers to you, however long you may be acquainted with them. You cannot tell who or what they are. The roller of fashion reduces them all to one level; and, being all clapped into the same mould, they become mere repetitions of each other, as like as peas, without exhibiting the slightest point of variety. Now, mother," continued Sir John, "the wife I should like is one whose heart, whose inmost nature, should be at once open to my view, unwarped and undisguised by the customs and fashions of the world."

"Upon my word, John, you are more than usually eloquent this morning," said Lady Gowan, laughing. "But pray now, do tell me, John, shortly and unequivocally, what is the drift of this long, flowery, and very sensible speech of yours? for that there is a drift in it I can clearly perceive. You are aiming at something which you do not like to plump upon me at once."

Sir John looked a good deal confused on finding that his mother's shrewdness had detected a latent purpose in his remarks, and endeavoured to evade the acknowledgment of that purpose, until he should have her opinion of the observations he had made; and in this he succeeded. Having pressed her on this point—

"Well, my son," replied Lady Gowan, "if you think that you cannot find a woman in a station of life corresponding to your own that will suit your taste, look for her in any other you please; and, when found, take her. Consult your own happiness, John, and in doing so you will consult mine. I will not object to your marrying whomsoever you please. All that I bargain for is, that she be a perfectly virtuous woman, and of irreproachable character; and I don't think this is being unreasonable. But do now, John, tell me at once," she added, in a graver tone, and taking her son solemnly by the hand, "have you fixed your affections on a woman of humble birth and station? I rather suspect this is the case."

"I have then, mother," replied Sir John, returning his mother's expressive and affectionate pressure of the hand; "the daughter of a humble yeoman, a woman who——" But we will spare the reader the infliction of the high-flown encomiums of all sorts which Sir John lavished on the object of his affections. Suffice it to say, that they included every quality of both mind and person which go to the adornment of the female sex.

When he had concluded, Lady Gowan, who made the necessary abatements from the panegyric her son had passed on the lady of his choice, said that, with regard to his attachment, she could indeed have wished it had fallen on one some-

what nearer his own station in life, but that, nevertheless, she had no objection whatever to accept of Miss Harrison as a daughter-in-law, since she was his choice. "Nay," she added, smiling, "if she only possesses one-tenth—ay, one-tenth, John—of the good qualities with which you have endowed her, I must say, you are a singularly fortunate man to have fall n in with such a treasure. But, John, allow me to say that, old woman as I am, I think that I could very easily show you that your prejudices, vulgar prejudices I must call them, against the higher classes of society, are unreasonable, unjust, and, I would add, illiberal, and therefore wholly unworthy of you. Does the elegance, the refinement, the accomplishments, the propriety of manner and delicacy of sentiment, to be met with in these circles, go for nothing with you? Does——"

"My dear mother," here burst in Sir John, "if you please, we will not argue the point; for, in truth, I do not feel disposed just now to argue about anything. I presume I am to understand, my ever kind and indulgent parent, that I have your full consent to marry Miss Harrison—that is, of course, if Miss Harrison will marry me?"

"Fully and freely, my child," said the old lady, now flinging her arms around her son's neck, while a tear glistened in her eye; "and may God bless your union, and make it happy!"

Sir John with no less emotion returned the embrace of his affectionate parent, and, in the most grateful language he could command, thanked her for her ready compliance with his wishes.

On the day following that on which the preceding conversation between Sir John Gowan and his mother took place, the inmates of Todshaws were surprised at the appearance of a splendid equipage driving up towards the house.

"Wha in a' the world's this?" said Jeanie to her father, as they both stood at the door, looking at the glittering vehicle, as it flashed in the sun and rolled on towards them. "Some travellers that hae mistaen their road."

"Very likely," replied her father; "yet I canna understand what kind o' a mistake it could be that should bring them to such an out-o'-the-way place as this. It's no a regular carriage road—that they micht hae seen; an' if they hae gane wrang, they'll find some difficulty in getting richt again. But here they are, sae we'll sune ken a' about it."

As Mr Harrison said this, the carriage, now at the distance of only some twenty or thirty yards from the house, stopped; a gentleman stepped out, and advanced smiling towards Mr Harrison and his daughter. They looked surprised, nay confounded; for they could not at all comprehend who their visitor was.

"How do you do, Mr Harrison?" exclaimed the latter, stretching out his hand to the person he addressed; "and how do you do, Miss Harrison?" he said, taking Jeanie next by the hand.

In the stranger's tones and manner the acute perceptions of Miss Harrison recognised something she had heard and seen before, and the recognition greatly perplexed her; nor was this perplexity lessened by the discovery which she also made, that the countenance of the stranger recalled one which she had seen on some former occasion. In short, the person now before her she thought presented a most extraordinary likeness to the fiddler—only that he had no fiddle, that he was infinitely better dressed, and that his pockets were not sticking out with lumps of cheese and cold beef. That they were the same person, however, she never dreamed for a moment.

In his daughter's perplexity on account of the resemblances alluded to, Mr Harrison did not participate, as, having paid little or no attention to the personal appearance of the fiddler, he

detected none of them; and it was thus that he replied to the stranger's courtesies with a gravity and coolness which contrasted strangely with the evident embarrassment and confusion of his daughter, although she herself did not well know how this accidental resemblance, as she deemed it, should have had such an effect upon her.

Immediately after the interchange of the commonplace civilities above mentioned had passed between the stranger and Mr Harrison and his daughter—

"Mr Harrison," he said, "may I have a private word with you?"

"Certainly, sir," replied the former. And he led the way into a little back parlour.

"Excuse us for a few minutes, Miss Harrison," said the stranger, with a smile, ere he followed, and bowing gallantly to her as he spoke.

On entering the parlour, Mr Harrison requested the stranger to take a seat, and placing himself in another, he awaited the communication of his visitor.

"Mr Harrison," now began the latter, "in the first place, it may be proper to inform you that I am Sir John Gowan of Castle Gowan."

"Oh!" said Mr Harrison, rising from his seat, approaching Sir John, and extending his hand towards him; "I am very happy indeed to see Sir John Gowan. I never had the pleasure of seeing you before, sir; but I have heard much of you, and not to your discredit, I assure you, Sir John."

"Well, that is some satisfaction, at any rate, Mr Harrison," replied the baronet, laughing. "I am glad that my character, since it happens to be a good one, has been before me. It may be of service to me. But to proceed to business. You will hardly recognise in me, my friend, I daresay," continued Sir John, "a certain fiddler who played to you at a certain wedding lately, and to whose music you and your family lanced on the green in front of your own house the other night."

Mr Harrison's first reply to this extraordinary observation was a broad stare of amazement and utter non-comprehension. But after a few minutes' pause thus employed, "No, certainly not, sir," he said, still greatly perplexed and amazed. "But I do not understand you. What is it you mean, Sir John?"

"Why," replied the latter, laughing, "I mean very distinctly that *I* was the musician on both of the occasions alluded to. The personification of such a character has been one of my favourite frolics; and however foolish it may be considered, I trust it will at least be allowed to have been a harmless one."

"Well, this is most extraordinary," replied Mr Harrison, in great astonishment. "Can it be possible? Is it really true, Sir John, or are ye jesting?"

"Not a bit of that, I assure you, sir. I am in sober earnest. But all this," continued Sir John, "is but a prelude to the business I came upon. To be short, then, Mr Harrison: I saw and particularly marked your daughter on the two occasions alluded to, and the result, in few words, is, that I have conceived a very strong attachment to her. Her beauty, her cheerfulness, her good temper, and simplicity, have won my heart, and I have now come to offer her my hand."

"Why, Sir John, this—this," stammered out the astonished farmer, "is more extraordinary still. You do my daughter and myself great honour, Sir John—great honour, indeed."

"Not a word of that," replied the knight, "not a word of that, Mr Harrison. My motives are selfish. I am studying my own happiness, and therefore am not entitled to any acknowledgments of that kind. You, I hope, sir, have no objection to accept of me as a son-in-law; and I trust your daughter

will have no very serious ones either. Her affections, I hope, are not pre-engaged?"

"Not that I know of, Sir John," replied Mr Harrison; "indeed, I may venture to say positively that they are not. The girl has never yet, that I am aware of, thought of a husband—at least, not more than young women usually do; and as to my having any objections, Sir John, so far from that, I feel, I assure you, extremely grateful for such a singular mark of your favour and condescension as that you have just mentioned."

"And you anticipate no very formidable ones on the part of your daughter?"

"Certainly not, Sir John; it is impossible there should."

"Will you, then, my dear sir,' added Sir John, "be kind enough to go to Miss Harrison and break this matter to her, and I will wait your return?"

With this request the farmer instantly complied; and having found his daughter, opened to her at once the extraordinary commission with which he was charged. We would fain describe, but find ourselves wholly incompetent to the task, the effect which Mr Harrison's communication had upon his daughter, and on the other female members of the family, to all of whom it was also soon known. There was screaming, shouting, laughing, crying, fear, joy, terror, and amazement, all blended together in one tremendous medley, and so loud that it reached the ears of Sir John himself, who, guessing the cause of it, laughed very heartily at the strange uproar.

"But, oh! the cauld beef an' the cheese that I crammed into his pockets, father," exclaimed Jeanie, running about the room in great agitation. "He'll never forgie me that—never, never," she said, in great distress of mind. "To fill a knight's pockets wi' dauds o' beef and cheese! Oh! goodness, goodness! I canna marry him. I canna see him after that. It's impossible, father — impossible, impossible!"

"If that be a' your objections, Jeanie," replied her father, smiling, "we'll soon get the better o't. I'll undertake to procure ye Sir John's forgiveness for the cauld beef and cheese—that's if ye think it necessary to ask a man's pardon for filling his pockets wi' most unexceptionable provender. I wish every honest man's pouches war as weel lined, lassie, as Sir John's was that nicht." Saying this, Mr Harrison returned to Sir John, and informed him of the result of his mission, which was—but this he had rather made out than been told, for Jeanie could not be brought to give any rational answer at all—that his addresses would not, he believed, be disagreeable to his daughter; "which," he added, "is, I suppose, all that you desire in the meantime, Sir John."

"Nothing more, nothing more, Mr Harrison; she that's not worth wooing's not worth winning. I only desired your consent to my addresses, and a regular and honourable introduction to your daughter. The rest belongs to me. I will now fight my own battle, since you have cleared the way, and only desire that you may wish me success."

'That I do with all my heart," replied the farmer; "and, if I can lend you a hand, I will do it with right good will."

"Thank you, Mr Harrison, thank you," replied Sir John; "and now, my dear sir," he continued, "since you have so kindly assisted me thus far, will you be good enough to help me just one step farther? Will you now introduce me in my new character to your daughter? Hitherto she has known me only," he said, smiling as he spoke, "as an itinerant fiddler, and I long to meet her on a more serious footing—and on one," he added, again laughing, "I hope, a trifle more respectable."

"That I'll very willingly do, Sir John," replied Mr Harrison, smiling in his turn; "but I must tell you plainly, that I have some doubts of being able to prevail on Jane to meet you at this particular moment. She has one most serious objection to seeing you."

"Indeed!" replied Sir John, with an earnestness that betokened some alarm. "Pray, what is that objection?"

"Why, sir," rejoined the latter, "allow me to reply to that question by asking you another. Have you any recollection of carrying away out of my house, on the last night you were here, a pocketful of cheese and cold beef?"

"Oh! perfectly, perfectly," said Sir John, laughing, yet somewhat perplexed. "Miss Harrison was kind enough to furnish me with the very liberal supply of the articles you allude to; cramming them into my pocket with her own fair hands."

"Just so," replied Mr Harrison, now laughing in his turn. "Well, then, to tell you a truth, Sir John, Jane is so dreadfully ashamed of that circumstance, that she positively will not face you."

"Oh ho! is that the affair?" exclaimed the delighted baronet. "Why, then, if she won't come to us, we'll go to her; and the way, Mr Harrison, if you please." Mr Harrison did lead the way, and Jane was caught.

Beyond this point our story need not be prolonged, as here all its interest ceases. We have only now to add, then, that the winning manners, gentle dispositions, and very elegant person of Sir John Cowan, very soon completed the conquest he aimed at; and Jeanie Harrison, in due time, became LADY COWAN.

PEAT-CASTING TIME.

BY THOMAS GILLESPIE.

IN the olden times, there were certain fixed occasions when labour and frolic went hand in hand—when professional duty and kindhearted glee mutually kissed each other. The "rockin'" mentioned by Burns—

On Fasten e'en we had a rockin'—

I still see in the dim and hazy distance of the past. It is only under the refractive medium of vigorous recollection that I can again bring up to view (as the Witch of Endor did Samuel) those images that have been reposing, "'midst the wreck of things that were," for more than fifty years. Yet my early boyhood was familiar with these social senile and juvenile festivities. *There* still sits Janet Smith, in her toy-mutch and check-apron, projecting at intervals the well-filled spindle into the distance. Beside her is Isabel Kirk, elongating and twirling the yet unwound thread. Nanny Nivison occupies a *creepy* on the further side of the fire (making the third Fate!), with her shears. Around, and on bedsides, are seated Lizzy Gibson, with her favoured lad; Tam Kirkpatrick, with his jo Jean on his knee; Rob Paton the stirk-herd; and your humble servant. And "now the crack gaes round, and who so wilful as to put it by?" The story of past times; the report of recent love-matches and miscarriages; the gleeful song, bursting unbid from the young heart, swelling forth in beauty and in brightness like the waters from the rock of Meribah;

the occasional female remonstrance against certain *welcome* impertinences, in shape of, "Come now, Tam—nane o' yer nonsense." "Will I I say, be peaceable, and behave yersel afore folk. 'Od, ye'll squeeze the very breath out o' a body."

> Till, in a social glass o' strunt,
> They parted off careering
> On sic a night.

I've heard a lilting at our ewe-milking.

How few of the present generation have ever heard of this "lilting," except in song. It is the gayest and sunniest season of the year. The young lambs, in their sportive whiteness, are coursing it, and bleating it, responsive to their dams, on the hill above. The old ewes on the plain are marching—

The labour much of man and dog—

to the pen or fold. The response to the clear-toned bleat of their woolly progeny is given, anon and anon, in a short, broken, low bass. It is the raven conversing with the jackdaw! All is bustle, excitement, and badinage.

"Weer up that ewe, Jenny, lass. Wha kens but her woo may yet be a blanket for you and ye ken wha to sleep in!"

"Haud yer tongue, Tammie, and gang hame to yer books and yer schoolin. Troth, it will be twa days ere the craws dirty your kirk riggin!"

Wouf, wouf, wouf!—hee, hee, hee!—hoch, hoch, hoch!—there *in* they go, and *in* they are, their horny heads wedged over each other, and a trio of stout, well-made damsels, with petticoats tied up "*à la breeches*," tugging away at their well-filled dugs.

"Troth, Jenny, that ewe will waur ye; 'od, I think ye hae gotten haud o' the auld tup himsel. He's as powerfu, let me tell ye, as auld Frannie, wham ye kissed sae snug last nicht ayont the peat-mou."

"Troth, at weel, Tam, ye're a fearfu liar. They wad be fonder than I am o' cock birds wha wad gie tippence for the stite o' a howlet."

"Howlet here, howlet there, Jenny, ye ken weel his auld brass will buy you a new pan."

At this crisis the crack becomes general and inaudible from its universality, mixed as it is with the bleating of ewes, the barking of dogs, together with the singing of herd-laddies and of your humble servant.

Harvest is a blithe time! May all the charms of "Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on him" who shall first invent a reaping-machine! The best of all reaping-machines is "the human *arm* divine," whether brawny or muscular, or soft and rounded. The old woman of sixty sits all year long at her domestic occupations—you would deem her incapable of any out-door exertions; but, at the sound of the harvest-horn, she renews her youth, and sallies forth into the harvest-field, with hook over shoulder, and a heart buoyant with the spirit of the season, to take her place and drive her rig with the youngest there. The half-grown boy and girl of fourteen are mingled up in duty and in frolic, in jest and jibe, and jeer and laugh, with the stoutest and the most matured. Mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, and, above and beyond all, "lads and lasses, lovers gay!" mix and mingle in one united band, for honest labour and exquisite enjoyment; and when at last the joyous kirn is won—when the maiden of straw is borne aloft and in triumph, to adorn for twelve months the wall of the farmer's ben—when the rich and cooling curds-and-cream have been ramhorn-spooned into as many mouths as there are persons in the "toun"—then comes the mighty and long-anticipated festival, the roasted ox, the stewed sheep, the big pot enriched with the cheering and elevating draught, the punch dealt about in ladles and in jugs, the inspiring

fiddle, the maddening reel, and the Highland fling.

> *We* cannot but remember such things were,
> And were most dear to us!

Hay harvest, too, had its soft and delicate tints, resembling those of the grain harvest. As the upper rainbow curves and glows with fainter colouring around the interior and the brighter, so did the hay harvest of yore anticipate and prefigure, as it were, the other. The hay tedded to the sun; the bare-footed lass, her locks floating in the breeze, her cheeks redolent of youth, and her eyes of joy, scattering or collecting, carting or ricking, the sweetly-scented meadow produce, under a June sun and a blue sky!

> Oh, to feel as I have felt,
> Or be what I have been!—

the favoured lover, namely, of that youthful purity, now in its fourteenth summer—myself as pure and all unthinking of aught but affection the most intense, and feelings the most soft and unaccountable.

> Ah, little did thy mother think,
> That day she cradled thee,
> What lands thou hadst to travel in,
> What death thou hadst to dee!

Poor Jeanie Johnston! I have seen her, only a few weeks ago, during the sittings of the General Assembly, sunk in poverty, emaciated by disease, the wife of an old soldier, himself disabled from work, tenanting a dark hovel in Pipe's Close, Castlehill of Edinburgh.

In the upper district of Dumfries-shire—the land of my birth, and of all those early associations which cling to me as the mistletoe to the oak, and which are equally hallowed with that druidical excrescence—there are no coals, but a superabundance of moss; consequently peat-fires *are* very *generally* still, and *were*, at the time of which I speak, *universally*, made use of; and a peat-fire, on a cold, frosty night of winter, when every star is glinting and goggling through the blue, or when the tempest raves, and

> There's no a star in a' the cary,

is by no means to be despised. To be sure, it is short-lived—but then it kindles soon; it does not, it is true, entertain us with fantastic and playful jets of flame—but then its light is full, united, and steady; the heat which it sends out on all sides is superior to that of coals. Wood is sullen and sulky, whether in its log or faggot form. It eats away into itself, in a cancer ignition. But the blazing peat—

> The bleezing ingle, and the clean hearth-stane—

is the very soul of cheerfulness and comfort. But then peats must be prepared. They do not grow in hedges, nor vegetate in meadows. They must be cut from the black and consolidated moss; and a peculiarly-constructed spade, with a sharpe edge and crooked ear, must be made use of for that purpose; and into the field of operation must be brought, at casting-time, the spademen, with their spades; and the barrowmen, and women, boys, and girls, with their barrows; and the breakfast sowans, with their creamy milk, cut and crossed into circles and squares; and the dinner stew, with its sappy potatoes and gusty-onioned mutton fragments; and the rest at noon, with its active sports and feats of agility; and, in particular, with its jumps from the moss-brow into the soft, marshy substance beneath—and *thereby hangs my tale*, which shall be as short and simple as possible.

One of the loveliest visions of my boyhood is Nancy Morrison. She was a year or so older than me; but we went and returned from school together. She was the only daughter of a poor widow woman, who supported herself in a romantic glen on the skirts of the Queensberry Hills, by bleaching or whitening webs. In those days, the alkalies and acids had not yet superseded the slower progress of whitening

green linen by soap-boiling, trampling, and alternate drying in the sun, and wetting with pure running water. Many is the time and oft that Nanny and I have wielded the watering-pan, in this fairy, sunny glen, all day long. Whilst the humble-bee boomed past us, the mavis occupied the thorn-tree, and the mother of Nanny employed herself in some more laborious department of the same process, Nanny and I have set us down on the greensward—*in tenaci gramine*—played at chucks, "head him and cross him," or some such amusement. At school, Nanny had ever a faithful defender and avenger in me; and I have even purloined apples and gooseberries from the castle garden—and all for the love I bore "to my Nanny, oh!"

I know not that any one has rightly described a first love. It is not the love of man and woman, though that be fervent and terrible; it is not the love of mere boy and girlhood, though that be disinterested and engrossing; but it is the love of the period of life which unites the two. "Is there a man whose blood is warm within him" who does not recollect it? Is there a woman who has passed through the novitiate of fifteen, who has not still a distinct impression of the feeling of which I speak? It is not sexual, and yet it can only exist betwixt the sexes. It is the sweetest delusion under which the soul of a created being can pass. It is modest, timid, retiring, bashful; yet, in absence of the adored—in seclusion, in meditation, and in dreams—it is bold, resolute, and determined. There is no plan, no design, no right conception of *cause;* yet the *effect* is sure and the bliss perfect. Oh, for one hour—one little hour—from the thousands which I have idled, sported, dreamed away in the company of my darling school-companion, Nancy!

Will Mather was about two years older than Nancy—a fine youth, attending the same school, and evidently an admirer of Nancy. Mine was the love of comparative boyhood; but his was a passion gradually ripening (as the charms of Nancy budded into womanhood) into a manly and matrimonial feeling. I loved the girl merely as such—his eye, his heart, his whole soul were in his future bride. Marriage in no shape ever entered into my computations; but his eager look and heaving bosom bespoke the definite purpose—the anticipated felicity. I don't know exactly why, but I was never jealous of Will Mather. We were companions; and he was high-souled and generous, and stood my friend in many perilous quarrels. I knew that *my* pathway in life was to be afar from that in which Nancy and Will were likely to walk; and I felt in my heart that, dear as this beautiful rosebud was to me, I was not *man* enough—I was not *peasant* enough to wear it in my bosom. Had Nancy on any occasion turned round to be kissed by me, I would have fled over muir and dale to avoid her presence; and yet I had often a great desire to obtain that favour. Once, indeed, and only once, did I obtain, or rather steal it. She was sitting beside a bird's nest, the young ones of which she was feeding and cherishing—for the parent birds, by the rapacity of a cat, had recently perished. As the little bills were expanding to receive their food, her countenance beamed with pity and benevolence. I never saw even *her* so lovely; so, in a moment, I had her round the neck, and clung to her lips with the tenacity of a creature drowning. But, feeling at once the awkwardness of my position, I took to my heels, becoming immediately invisible amidst the surrounding brushwood.

Such was Will Mather, and such was Nancy Morrison, at the period of which I am speaking. We must now advance about two or three years in our chronology, and find Will possessed of

a piece of information which bore materially on his future fortunes. Will was an illegitimate child. His mother had kept the secret so well that he did not know his father, though he had frequently urged her to reveal to him privately all that she knew of his parentage. In conversing, too, with Nancy, his now affianced bride, he had expressed similiar wishes; whilst she, with a becoming and feminine modesty, had urged him not to press an aged parent on so delicate a point. At last the old woman was taken seriously ill, and, on her death-bed and at midnight, revealed to her son the secret of his birth. He was the son of a proprietor in the parish, and a much-respected man. The youth, so soon as he had closed his mother's eyes, hurried off, amidst the darkness, to the abode of his father, and, entering by a window, was in his father's bed-chamber and over his body ere he was fully awake.

"John Scott!" said the son, in a firm and terrible tone, grasping his parent meantime convulsively round the neck, "John Scott of Auchincleuch, *I am thy son!*"

The conscience-stricken culprit, being taken by surprise, and almost imagining this a supernatural intimation from Heaven, exclaimed, in trembling accents:

"But who are you that makes this averment?"

"I am thy son, father—oh, I am thy son!"

Will could say no more; for his heart was full, and his tears dropped hot and heavy on a father's face.

"Yes," replied the parent, after a convulsive solemn sob—(O Heaven! thou art just!)—"yes, thou *art* indeed my son—my long-denied and ill-used boy—whom the fear of the world's scorn has tempted me, against all the yearnings of my better nature, to use so unjustly. But come to my bosom—to a father's bosom *now*, for I know that voice too well to distrust thee."

In a few months after this interesting disclosure, John Scott was numbered with his fathers, and Will Scott (no longer Mather) became Laird of Auchincleuch.

Poor Nancy was at first somewhat distressed at this discovery, which put her betrothed in a position to expect a higher or genteeler match. But there was no cause of alarm. Will was true to the backbone, and would as soon have burned his Bible as have sacrificed his future bride. After much pressing for an early day on the part of the lover, it was agreed, at last, that the marriage should take place at "Peat-casting Time," and that Nancy should, for the last time, assist at the casting of her mother's peats.

I wish I could stop here, or at least proceed to give you an account of the happy nuptials of Will Scott and Nancy Morrison, the handsomest couple in the parish of Closeburn. But it may not be! These eyes, which are still filled (though it is forty-eight years since) with tears, and this pen, which trembles as I proceed, must attest and record the catastrophe.

Nancy, the beautiful bride, and I (for I was now on the point of leaving school for college) agreed to have a jump for the last time (often had we jumped before) from a suitable moss-brow.

"My frolicsome days will sune be ower," she cried, laughing; "the Gudewife of Auchincleuch will hae something else to do than jump frae the moss-brow; and, while my name is Nancy Morrison, I'll hail the dules, or jump wi' the best o' my auld playmates."

"Weel dune, Nancy!" cried I; "you are now to be the wife o' the Laird o' Auchincleuch, when your jumping days will be at an end; and I am soon to be sent to college, where the only jump I may get may be from the top of a pile of old black-letter folios—

no half sae gude a point of advantage as the moss-brow."

"There's the Laird o' Auchincleuch coming," cried Peggy Chalmers, one of the peat-casters, who was standing aside, along with several others. "He's nae langer the daft Will Mather, wha liked a jump as weel as the blithest swankie o' the barnyard. Siller maks sair changes; and yet, wha wad exchange the Will Scott of Auchincleuch, your rich bridegroom, Nancy, for the Will Mather, your auld lover? Dinna tempt Providence, my hinny! The laird winna like to see his bride jumpin frae knowe to knowe like a daft giglet, within a week o' her marriage."

"Tout!" cried Nancy, bursting out into a loud laugh; "see, he's awa round by the Craw Plantin, and winna see us—and whar's the harm if he did? Come now, Tammie, just ae spring and the last, and I'll wad ye my kame against your cravat, that I beat ye by the length o' my marriage slipper."

"Weel dune, Nancy!" cried several of the peat-casters, who, leaning on their spades, stood and looked at us with pleasure and approbation.

The Laird had, as Nancy said, crossed over by what was called the Craw Plantin, and was now out of sight. To make the affair more ludicrous (for we were all bent on fun), Nancy took out, from among her high-built locks of auburn hair, her comb—a present from her lover—and impledged it in the hands of Billy Watson, along with my cravat, which I had taken off, and handed to the umpire.

"Here is a better moss-brow," cried one, at a distance.

And so to be sure it was, for it was much higher than the one we had fixed upon, and the landing-place was soft and elastic. Our practice was, always to jump together, so that the points of the toes could be measured when both the competitors' feet were still fixed in the moss. We mounted the moss-brow. I was in high spirits, and Nancy could scarcely contain herself for pure, boisterous, laughing glee. I went off, but the mad girl could not follow, for she was still holding her sides, and laughing immoderately. I asked her what she laughed at. She could not tell. She was under the influence of one of those extraordinary cachinations that sometimes convulse our diaphragms, without our being able to tell why, and certainly without our being able to put a stop to them. Her face was flushed, and the fire of her glee shone bright in her eye. I took my position again.

"Now!" cried I; and away we flew, and stuck deeply in the soft and spongy moss.

I stood with my feet in the ground, that the umpire might come and mark the distance. A loud scream broke on my ear. I looked round, and, dreadful sight! I saw Nancy lying extended on the ground, with the blood pouring out at her mouth in a large stream! She had burst a blood-vessel. The fit of laughing which preceded her effort to leap had, in all likelihood, distended her delicate veins, and predisposed her to the unhappy result.

The loud scream had attracted the notice of the bridegroom, who came running from the back of the Craw Plantin. The sight appalled and stupefied him. He cried for explanation, and ran forward to his dead or dying bride, in wild confusion. Several voices essayed an explanation, but none were intelligible. I was as unable as the rest to satisfy the unhappy man; but, though we could not speak intelligibly, we could act, and several of us lifted her up. This step sealed her fate. The change in her position produced another stream of blood. She opened her eyes once, and fixed them for a moment on Will Scott. She then closed them, and for ever.

I saw poor Nancy carried home.

Will Scott, who upheld her head, fainted before he proceeded twenty yards, and I was obliged to take his place. I was almost as unfit for the task as himself; for I reproached myself as the cause of her death. I have lived long. Will the image of that procession ever pass from my mind? The blood-stained moss-ground, the bleeding body, the trailing clothes, the unbound locks, are all before me. I can proceed no further. Would that I could stop the current of my thoughts as easily as that of this feathered chronicler of sorrow! But—

> There is a silent sorrow here,
> A grief I'll ne'er impart;
> It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear,
> But it consumes my heart.

I have taken up my pen to add, that Will Mather still remains a bachelor, and that on every visit I make to Dumfriesshire, I take my dinner, *solus cum solo*, at Auchincleuch, and that many tears are annually shed, over a snug bottle, for poor Nancy.

AN ADVENTURE WITH THE PRESS-GANG.

How goes the press? was, as usual, our first and most anxious inquiry when the pilot boat came alongside to the westward of Lundy Island. The brief but emphatic reply was, "As hot as blazes." Knowing therefore what we had to expect, the second mate and I, and one or two others, applied to the captain to set us ashore at Ilfracomb, but he would not listen to us. A double-reefed topsail breeze was blowing from the westward, and a vigorous flood-tide was setting up channel, enabling us to pass over the ground about fifteen knots. Such advantages the captain was no way disposed to forego, so that there was nothing for us but to trust to Providence and our stow holes. The breeze flagged towards sunset, and it was not until an hour after dusk that we dropped anchor in Kingroad.

As soon as the ship was brought up, I stepped in the main rigging to lend a hand to furl the topsail, but had not reached the top, when I heard the cabin boy calling out in an Irish whisper, "Bobstay, down, down, the press-boat is alongside." I was on deck in a twinkling, and was springing to the after scuttle, when I found myself seized violently by the arm. I trembled. It was the same boy that had called me down. "They are already in the mizen chains," said he; "to the fore scuttle, or you are a gone man."

Down the fore peak I went with the rapidity of lightning, and down jumped three of the gang after me with little less velocity.

"Oho, my tight little fellow," said one of them, thrusting his cutlass down a crevice over my head; "I see you; out you must come, or here goes an inch or two of cold steel into your bread-bag."

I knew well that I was beyond his reach, and took care to let him have all the talk to himself. They rummaged about all over the hold, thrusting their cutlasses down every chink they could perceive, but no one could they find give a single squeak. In about half an hour I heard the well-known voice of the cabin boy calling me on deck. On reaching the deck, I found that the gang had carried off three of our hands, and had expressed their determination to renew their search next day. Of course my grand object was to get ashore without delay. The moment we anchored, the captain had

gone off to Bristol to announce his arrival to his owners; and as the mate and I were not on good terms, he refused to allow me the use of the ship's boat. None of the watermen whose boats we hailed would come alongside, because if they had been found assisting the crew of merchant vessels to escape the press, they themselves would have been subjected to its grasp. About midnight, however, one waterman came alongside, with whom the love of money overcame the fear of danger, and he agreed to pull the second mate, boatswain, and myself ashore, for half a guinea each. I had brought from the West Indies a small venture in sugar, a cask of which, about a hundredweight, I took into the boat with me, to clear present expenses.

Shortly after we had shoved off, we found ourselves chased by a long boat, which the waterman knew, by the sound of the oars, to be the guard-boat. How we did pull! But it seemed in vain; we found it would be impossible to reach the landing-place, so we pulled for the nearest point of land. The moment the boat touched the ground, I took the cask of sugar on my shoulder, and expecting solid ground under the boat's bows, jumped ashore. Instead of solid ground, I found myself above the knees in mud. The guard-boat was within a hundred yards of the shore, and what was to be done! All that a man has will he give for his liberty, so away went the cask of sugar. Thus lightened, I soon scrambled out, when the three of us scampered off as fast as it was possible for feet to carry us. What became of the waterman, or his boat, or my cask of sugar, we never knew; nor did we think of stopping to breathe or look round us, till we reached the town of Peel, where by a blazing fire and over a dish of beef-steaks, and a few tankards of brown stout, we soon forgot our dangers and our fears.

Our residence here, as far as liberty was concerned, was pretty nearly on a par with prison residence. The second mate and I lodged together, and during daylight we never durst show our faces, except, perhaps, between four and six in the morning, when we sometimes took a ramble in a neighbouring burying-ground, to read epitaphs; and this, from the love of the English to poetical ones, was equivalent to the loan of a volume of poetry. But Time's pinions seemed in our eyes loaded with lead, and we were often inclined to sing with the plaintive swain,

> Ah! no, soft and slow
> The time it winna pass,
> The shadow of the trysting thorn,
> Is tether'd on the grass.

And had it not been for the kindly attentions of our landlord's two handsome daughters, to whose eyebrows we indited stanzas, I know not how we would have got the time killed.

Snug as we thought ourselves, the press-gang had by some means or other been put on the scent, and one day very nearly pounced on us. So cautious had they been in their visit, that their approach was not perceived until they were actually in the kitchen. Fortunately we were at this time in an upper room, and one of the daughters rightly judging of the purpose of their visit, flew upstairs to warn us of our danger, and point out a place of safety. This place was above the ceiling, and the only access to it was through a hole in the wall a little way up the vent. It was constructed as a secure place to lodge a little brandy or geneva, that sometimes found its way to the house, without having been polluted with the exciseman's rod. It was excellently adapted to our purpose, and the entrance to it was speedily pointed out by our pretty little guardian angel. Up the vent we sprung like a brace of chimney sweeps, and had scarcely reached our place of concealment, when the gang rushed upstairs, burst open the door, and began

to rummage every corner of the room. The bed was turned out, the presses all minutely examined, and even the vent itself underwent a scrutiny, but no seamen could be found.

"Tell us, my young lady, whereabout you have stowed away them there fellows, for we knows they are in the house?"

"What fellows?" said the dear little girl, with a composure which we thought it impossible for her to assume so soon after her violent trepidation.

"Why, them there fellows as came ashore from one of the West Indiamen t'other day; we knows they are here, and are determined to have 'em."

"You have certainly been misinformed," said she; "you are welcome to search the house, but be assured you will find no such men here."

"Come, come, my little fair un, that is all in my eye and Betty Martin. Here they are, this is certain, and we are determined to make our quarters good till we find them out;" and away they went to search the other apartments of the house.

Meanwhile our charming little protectress, alarmed at the threatened siege, and fearing that we would be starved into a surrender, took the opportunity, while the gang were rummaging the parlour and some other bedrooms, to supply our garrison with provisions. A basket with boiled ham, a couple of capons, a household loaf of ample dimensions, half-a-dozen of brown stout, the family bottle of excellent stingo, and a can of water, were expeditiously handed up the vent. This supply set our minds quite at ease, as we knew it would enable us to stand a week's close siege. Our patience, however, was not put to this trial, for the gang, after a two hours' vigilant search, abandoned their pursuit in despair, and departed.

We could not, of course, think of venturing up to Bristol to look after our wages, so we employed our landlord to perform this duty. After a good many vexatious delays, we succeeded in getting our money, paid off all scores, and began to think how we were to dispose of ourselves. My companion Lindsay was so deeply smitten with the charms of one of the youthful sirens, that he found it impossible to depart; and I had to concert all my future projects alone, and leave him bound in Cupid's silken chain.

My blue jacket and fringed dimity trousers, my check shirt and scarlet vest, were at once discarded, and their places supplied by articles of a more landward appearance. I knew that it would be impossible to travel the country safely in seaman's dress, so I determined to try my fortune as a beau. The body of Bill Bobstay incased in a ruffled shirt, silk vest, white stockings, breeches buttoned at the knees, and a swallow-tailed coat, presented such a curious spectacle, that he himself could scarcely help laughing at it, and it seemed to produce the same effects on the landlord's daughter, as she with a witching smile chucked up my chin, until she arranged the bights and ends of my white neckcloth, according to the most approved form. She took as long to perform this little office as I could have rigged *in toto*, and seamen are never backward in acts of courtesy, when the ladies are concerned. Her ruby lips were all the while within marlingspike's length of my own, and how could I avoid saluting them?

Thus equipped, I set out on foot for Bath, but as I had no business to perform in that city of invalided nabobs, I immediately took coach for London, and after travelling all night, I, on awaking from a short nap, found myself rattling over the stones at Hyde Park corner.

My object was to procure a passage to the northward, in one of the Leith or Berwick smacks, and I expected in eight or ten days, after an absence of as many years, to set foot once more on my native soil. As soon therefore as the

coach stopped in Piccadilly, I alighted, and knowing the bearing by compass of London Bridge, I, without waiting to breakfast, winded my way through the Haymarket, past Charing Cross, along the Strand, Fleet Street, and Ludgate Hill, till I arrived at St Paul's. From this point I took a fresh departure, and holding as nearly as cross streets would admit, a south-easterly course, gained Thames Street, and soon found myself in the vicinity of the Tower.

Smartly as I had moved my body along, my imagination, as is usual with me, had got a long way a-head. It had obtained a passage, secured a fair wind, landed me on the pier of Leith, and was arranging my introductory visit to my friends, so as to produce the greatest sum of agreeable surprise. But there is much, says the old proverb, between the cup and the lip. In the midst of this agreeable reverie, as I was crossing Tower Hill, I found myself tapped on the shoulder, and on looking round, was accosted by a man in seaman's dress in the words, "What ship?" I assumed an air of gravity and surprise, and told him I apprehended he was under some mistake, as my business did not lie among shipping. But the fellow was too well acquainted with his business to be thus easily put off. He gave a whistle, the sound of which still vibrates in my ear, and in a moment I was surrounded by half-a-dozen ruffians, whom I immediately suspected, and soon found out to be the press-gang. They dragged me hurriedly through several lanes and alleys, amid the mingled sympathy and execrations of a numerous crowd, which had collected to witness my fate, and soon landed me in the rendezvous. I was immediately ushered into the presence of the lieutenant of the gang, who questioned me as to my name, country, profession, and what business had led me to Tower Hill. Totally unexpecting any such interruption, I had not thought of concocting any plausible story, and my answers were evasive and contradictory. I did not acknowledge having been at sea; but my hands were examined, found hard with work, and discoloured with tar. This circumstance condemned me, and I was remanded for further examination.

Some of the gang then offered me spirits, affected to pity me, and pretended to comfort me under my misfortune, but like the comforters of Job, miserable comforters were they all. The very scoundrel who first seized me put on a sympathising look, and observed what a pity it was to be disappointed when so near the object of my wishes. Such sympathy from such a source was truly provoking; but having no way of showing my resentment, I was constrained to smother it.

In a short time I was reconducted into the presence of the lieutenant, who told me, as I was already in his hands, and would assuredly be kept, I might as well make a frank confession of my circumstances. It would save time, and insure me better treatment. What could I do? I might indeed have continued silent and sullen, but of what service could this prove? It might, or might not, have procured me worse treatment, but one thing I knew well, it would not restore me to liberty. I therefore acknowledged that I had been a voyage to the West Indies, and had come home carpenter of a ship. His eye brightened at this intelligence.

"I am glad of this, my lad. We are very much in want of carpenters. Step along with these lads, and they will give you a passage aboard."

The same fellows who had first seized me led me along the way we came, handed me into a pinnace lying at Tower Wharf, and before mid-day I was safely handed on board the Enterprize.

What crosses and vexations, and reverses and disappointments, are we mortals destined to meet with in life's

tempestuous voyage! At eight in the morning I entered London a free agent, elated with joy, and buoyed up with hope. At noon I entered a prison ship, a miserable slave, oppressed with sorrow, and ready to despair.

Despair, did I say? No. I will have nothing to do with that disturber of human peace. When misfortune befalls us, we are not to sit down in despondency and sigh. Up and be doing, is the wise man's maxim, and it was the maxim I was resolved to observe. What befell me on my arrival on board the Enterprize, what reception I met with, and what mirth I excited as I was lowered into the press-room, with my short breeches and swallow-tailed coat—what measures I exerted to regain my liberty, and what success attended these measures—the space at my disposal prevents me setting forth.—*Paisley Magazine.*

THE LAIRD OF COOL'S GHOST.

UPON the 3d day of February 1722 at seven o'clock in the evening, after I had parted with Thurston, and coming up the burial road, one came up riding after me. Upon hearing the noise of the horse's feet, I took it to be Thurston; but looking back, and seeing the horse of a gray colour, I called, "Who's there?" The answer was, "The Laird of Cool; be not afraid." Looking to him with the little light the moon afforded, I took him to be Collector Castlelaw, who had a mind to put a trick upon me, and immediately I struck with all my force with my cane, thinking I would leave a mark upon him that would make him remember his presumption; but although sensible I aimed as well as ever I did in my life, yet my cane finding no resistance, but flying out of my hand to the distance of sixty feet, and observing it by its white head, I dismounted and took it up, but had some difficulty in mounting again, partly by reason of a certain sort of trembling throughout my whole joints, something also of anger had its share in my confusion; for though he laughed when my staff flew out of my hand, coming up with him again (who halted all the time I was seeking my staff), I asked him once more who he was? He answered, "The Laird of Cool." I inquired, first, if he was the Laird of Cool; secondly, what brought him thither? and thirdly, what was his business with me? He answered, "The reason that I want you is, that I know you are disposed to do for me what none of your brethren in Nithsdale will so much as attempt, though it serve never so good a purpose. I told him I would never refuse to do anything to serve a good purpose, if I thought I was obliged to do it as my duty. He answered, that I had undertaken what few in Nithsdale would, for he had tried several persons on that subject, who were more obliged to him than I was to any person living. Upon this I drew my bridle reins, and asked in surprise, what I had undertaken? He answered, "That on Sabbath last, I heard you condemned Mr Paton, and the other ministers of Dumfries, for dissuading Mr Menzies from keeping his appointment with me; and if you had been in their place, would have persuaded the lad to do as I desired, and that you would have gone with him yourself, if he had been afraid; and if you had been in Mr Paton's place, you would have delivered my commissions yourself, as they tended to do several persons justice." I asked him, "Pray, Cool, who informed

you that I talked at that rate?" to which he answered, "You must know that we are acquainted with many things that the living know nothing about; these things you did say, and much more to that purpose, and deliver my commissions to my loving wife." Upon this I said, "'Tis a pity, Cool, that you who know so many things should not know the difference between an absolute and conditional promise; I did, indeed, at the time you mention, blame Mr Paton, for I thought him justly blamable, in hindering the lad to meet with you, and if I had been in his place, I would have acted quite the reverse; but I did never say, that if you would come to Innerwick and employ me, that I would go all the way to Dumfries on such an errand; that is what never so much as entered into my thoughts." He answered, "What were your thoughts I don't pretend to know, but I can depend on my information these were your words. But I see you are in some disorder; I will wait upon you when you have more presence of mind."

By this time we were at James Dickson's enclosure, below the churchyard; and when I was recollecting in my mind, if ever I had spoken these words he alleged, he broke off from me through the churchyard, with greater violence than any man on horseback is capable of, with such a singing and buzzing noise, as put me in greater disorder than I was in all the time I was with him. I came to my house, and my wife observed more than ordinary paleness in my countenance, and alleged that something ailed me. I called for a dram, and told her I was a little uneasy. After I found myself a little refreshed, I went to my closet to meditate on this most astonishing adventure.

Upon the 5th of March 1722, being at Harehead, baptizing the shepherd's child, I came off about sunsetting, and near William White's march, the Laird of Cool came up with me as formerly; and after his first salutation bade me not be afraid. I told him I was not in the least afraid, in the name of God and Christ my Saviour, that he would do me the least harm; for I knew that He in whom I trusted was stronger than all they put together; and if any of them should attempt to do, even to the horse that I ride upon, as you have done to Doctor Menzies' man, I have free access to complain to my Lord and Master, to the lash to whose resentment you are as liable now as before.

Cool. You need not multiply words on that head, for you are safe with me; and safer, if safer can be, than when I was alive.

Ogil. Well then, Cool, let me have a peaceable and easy conversation with you for the time we ride together, and give me some information concerning the affairs of the other world, for no man inclines to lose his time in conversing with the dead, without hearing or learning something useful.

Cool. Well, sir, I will satisfy you as far as I think proper and convenient. Let me know what information you want.

Ogil. May I then ask you, if you be in a state of happiness or not?

Cool. There are a great many things I can answer that the living are ignorant of; there are a great many things that, notwithstanding the additional knowledge I have acquired since my death, I cannot answer; and there are a great many questions you may start, of which the last is one that I will not answer.

Ogil. Then I know how to manage our conversation; whatever I inquire of you, I see you can easily shift me; to that I might profit more by conversing with myself.

Cool. You may try.

Ogil. Well, then, what sort of a body is that you appear in; and what sort of a horse is that you ride upon, which appears to be so full of mettle?

Cool. You may depend upon it, it is not the same body that I was witness to your marriage in, nor in which I died, for that is in the grave rotting; but it is such a body as serves me in a moment, for I can fly as fleet with it as my soul can do without it; so that I can go to Dumfries, and return again, before you can ride twice the length of your horse; nay, if I have a mind to go to London, or Jerusalem, or to the moon, if you please, I can perform all these journeys equally soon, for it costs me nothing but a thought or wish: for this body is as fleet as your thought, for in the moment of time you can turn your thoughts on Rome, I can go there in person; and as for my horse, he is much like myself, for he is Andrew Johnston, my tenant, who died forty-eight hours before me.

Ogil. So it seems when Andrew Johnston inclines to ride, you must serve him in the quality of a horse, as he does you now.

Cool. You are mistaken.

Ogil. I thought that all distinctions between mistresses and maids, lairds and tenants, had been done away at death.

Cool. True it is, but you do not take up the matter.

Ogil. This is one of the questions you won't answer.

Cool. You are mistaken, for the question I can answer, and after you may understand it.

Ogil. Well then, Cool, have you never yet appeared before God, nor received any sentence from Him as a Judge?

Cool. Never yet.

Ogil. I know you was a scholar, Cool, and 'tis generally believed there is a private judgment, besides the general at the great day, the former immediately after death. Upon this he interrupted me, arguing.

Cool. No such thing, no such thing! No trial; no trial till the great day! The heaven which good men enjoy after death consists only in the serenity of their minds, and the satisfaction of a good conscience; and the certain hopes they have of eternal joy, when that day shall come. The punishment or hell of the wicked, immediately after death, consists in the stings of an awakened conscience, and the terrors of facing the great Judge, and the sensible apprehensions of eternal torments ensuing! And this bears still a due proportion to the evils they did when living. So indeed the state of some good folks differ but little in happiness from what they enjoyed in the world, save only that they are free from the body, and the sins and sorrows that attended it. On the other hand, there are some who may be said rather not to have been good, than that they are wicked; while living, their state is not easily distinguished from that of the former; and under that class comes a great herd of souls—a vast number of ignorant people, who have not much minded the affairs of eternity, but at the same time have lived in much indolence, ignorance, and innocence.

Ogil. I thought that their rejecting the terms of salvation offered was sufficient ground for God to punish them with eternal displeasure; and as to their ignorance, that could never excuse them, since they live in a place of the world where the true knowledge of these things might have been easily attained.

Cool. They never properly rejected the terms of salvation; they never, strictly speaking, rejected Christ; poor souls, they had as great a liking both to Him and heaven, as their gross imaginations were capable of. Impartial reason must make many allowances, as the stupidity of their parents, want of education, distance from people of good sense and knowledge, and the uninterrupted applications they were obliged to give to their secular affairs for their daily bread, the impious treachery of their pastors, who persuaded them, that if they were of such a party all was well; and many other considerations which

God, who is pure and perfect reason itself, will not overlook. These are not so much under the load of Divine displeasure, as they are out of His grace and favour; and you know it is one thing to be discouraged, and quite another thing to be persecuted with all the power and rage of an incensed earthly king. I assure you, men's faces are not more various and different in the world, than their circumstances are after death.

Ogil. I am loath to believe all that you have said at this time, Cool (but I will not dispute those matters with you), because some things you have advanced seem to contradict the Scriptures, which I shall always look upon as the infallible truth of God. For I find, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, that the one was immediately after death carried up by the angels into Abraham's bosom, and the other immediately thrust down to hell.

Cool. Excuse me, sir, that does not contradict one word that I have said; but you seem not to understand the parable, whose only end is to illustrate the truth, that a man may be very happy and flourishing in this world, and wretched and miserable in the next; and that a man may be miserable in this world, and happy and glorious in the next.

Ogil. Be it so, Cool, I shall yield that point to you, and pass to another, which has afforded me much speculation since our last encounter; and that is, How you came to know that I talked after the manner that I did concerning Mr Paton, on the first Sabbath of February last? Was you present with me, but invisible? He answered very haughtily, No, sir, I was not present myself. I answered, I would not have you angry, Cool. I proposed this question for my own satisfaction; but if you don't think proper to answer, let it pass. After he had paused, with his eyes on the ground, for three or four minutes of time at most, with some haste and seeming cheerfulness, he says—

Cool. Well, sir, I will satisfy you in that point. You must know that there are sent from heaven angels to guard and comfort, and to do other good services to good people, and even the spirits of good men departed are employed in that errand.

Ogil. And do you not think that every man has a good angel?

Cool. No, but a great many particular men have: there are but few houses of distinction especially, but what have at least one attending them; and from what you have already heard of spirits, it is no difficult matter to understand how they may be serviceable to each particular member, though at different places at a great distance. Many are the good offices which the good angels do to them that fear God, though many times they are not sensible of it: and I know assuredly, that one powerful angel, or even an active clever soul departed, may be sufficient for some villages; but for your great cities, such as London, Edinburgh, or the like, there is one great angel that has the superintendence of the whole; and there are inferior angels, or souls departed, to whose particular care such a man, of such a particular weight or business, is committed. Now, sir, the kingdom of Satan does ape the kingdom of Christ as much in matters of politics as can be, well knowing that the court of wisdom is from above; so that from thence are sent out missionaries in the same order. But because the kingdom of Satan is much better replenished than the other, instead of one devil there are in many instances two or three commissioned to attend a particular family of influence and distinction.

Ogil. I read that there are ten thousand times ten thousand of angels that wait upon God, and sing His praise and do His will; and I cannot understand how the good angels can be inferior in number to the evil.

Cool. Did not I say, that whatever the

number be, the spirits departed are employed in the same business; so that as to the number of original deities, whereof Satan is chief, I cannot determine, but you need not doubt but there are more souls departed in that place, which in a loose sense you call hell, by almost an infinity, than what are gone to that place, which, in a like sense, you call heaven, which likewise are employed in the same purpose; and I can assure you that there is as great a difference between angels, both good and bad, as there is among men, with respect to their sense, knowledge, cunning, cleverness, and action; nay, which is more, the departed souls on both sides outdo severals, from their very first departure, of the original angels. This you will perhaps think a paradox, but is true.

Ogil. I do not doubt it; but what is that to my question, about which I am solicitous?

Cool. Take a little patience, sir; from what I have said you might have understood me, if you had your thoughts about you; but I shall explain myself to you. Both the good and the bad angels have stated times of rendezvous, and the principal angels, who have the charge either of towns, cities, or kingdoms, not to mention particular persons, villages, and families, and all that is transacted in these several parts of the country, are there made open; and at their re-encounter on each side, every thing is told, as in your parish, in milns, kilns, and smithies, with this difference, that many things false are talked at the living re-encounters, but nothing but what is exact truth is said or told among the dead; only I must observe to you, that, as I am credibly informed, several of the inferior bad angels, and souls of wicked men departed, have told many things that they have done, and then when a more intelligent spirit is sent out upon inquiry, and the report of the former seeming doubtful, he brings in a contrary report, and makes it appear truth, the former fares very ill: nevertheless their regard to truth prevents it; for while they observe the truth, they do their business and keep their station, for God is truth.

Ogil. So much truth being among the good angels, I am apt to think that lies and falsehood will be as much in vogue among the bad.

Cool. A gross mistake, and it is not alone the mistake which the living folks fall under with respect to the other world; for the case plainly is this: an ill man will not stick at a falsehood to promote his design; as little will an evil soul departed stop at anything that can make himself successful; but in admitting report he must tell the truth, or woe be to him. But besides their monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings, or whatever they be, departed souls acquainted may take a trip to see one another yearly, weekly, daily, or oftener, if they please. Thus, then, I answer your question that you was so much concerned about; for my information was from no less than three persons, viz., Aikman, who attends Thurston's family; James Corbet, who waits upon Mr Paton; for at that time he was then looking after Mrs Sarah Paton, who was at your house, and an original emissary appointed to wait upon yours.

At this I was much surprised, and after a little thinking, I asked him, And is their really, Cool, an emissary from hell, in whatever sense you take it, that attends my family?

Cool. You may depend upon it.

Ogil. And what do you think is his business?

Cool. To divert you from your duty, and cause you to do as many ill things as he can; for much depends on having the minister on their side.

Upon this I was struck with a sort of terror, which I cannot account for. In the meantime he said several things I did not understand. But after coming

to my former presence of mind, said—

Ogil. But, Cool, tell me, in earnest, if there be a devil that attends my family, though invisible.

Cool. Just as sure as you are breathing; but be not so much dejected upon this information, for I tell you likewise that there is a good angel who attends you, who is stronger than the other.

Ogil. Are you sure of that, Cool?

Cool. Yes; there is one riding on your right hand, who might as well have been elsewhere, for I meant you no harm.

Ogil. And how long has he been with me?

Cool. Only since we passed Brand's Lee, but now he is gone.

Ogil. We are just upon Elenscleugh, and I desire to part with you, though perhaps I have gained more by conversation than I could have otherwise done in a twelvemonth. I choose rather to see you another time, when you're at leisure, and I wish it were at as great a distance from Innerwick as you can.

Cool. Be it so, sir; but I hope you will be as obliging to me next re-encounter, as I have been to you this.

Ogil. I promise you I will, as far as is consistent with my duty to my Lord and Master Christ Jesus; and since you have obliged me so much by information, I will answer all the questions you propose, as far as consists with my knowledge; but I believe you want no information from me.

Cool. I came not here to be instructed by you, but I want your help of another kind.

Upon the 5th of April 1722, as I was returning from Old Hamstocks, Cool came up with me on horseback at the foot of the ruinous enclosure, before we came to Dod. I told him his last conversation had proved so acceptable to me, that I was well pleased to see him again; that there was a number of things that I wanted to inform myself further of, if he would be so good as satisfy me.

Cool. Last time we met, I refused you nothing you asked; and now I expect that you shall refuse me nothing that I shall ask.

Ogil. Nothing, sir, that is in my power, or that I can do with safety to my reputation and character. What, then, are your demands?

Cool. All that I desire of you is, that as you promised that on a Sabbath-day you would go to my wife, who now possesses all my effects, and tell her the following particulars—tell her in my name to rectify these matters:—First, That I was owing justly to Provost Crosby £50 Scots, and three years' interest, but on hearing of his death, my good-brother the Laird of C—l and I forged a discharge, narrated the bond, the sum, and other particulars, with this honourable clause, "And at the time it had fallen by, and could not be found;" with an obligation on the provost's part to deliver up this bond as soon as he could hit upon it. And this discharge was dated three months before the provost's death. And when his son and successor, Andrew Crosby, wrote to me concerning this bond, I came to him and showed him the forged discharge, which silenced him; so that I got up my bond without more ado. And when I heard of Robert Kennedy's death, with the same help of C—l, I got a bill upon him for £190, of which I got full and complete payment. C—l got the half. When I was at Dumfries, the same day that Robert Grier died, to whom I was owing an account of £36, C—l, my good-brother, was then at London; and not being able of myself, being but a bad writer, to make out a discharge of the account, which I wanted, I met accidently with one Robert Boyd, a poor writer lad in Dumfries; I took him to Mrs Carnock's, and gave him a bottle of wine, and told him I had paid Thomas Grier's account,

but had neglected to get a discharge, and if he would help me to one I would reward him. He flew away from me in a great passion, saying, he would rather be hanged; but if I had a mind for these things, I had better wait till C—l came home. This gave me great trouble, fearing what C—l and I had done formerly was no secret. I followed Boyd to the street, and made an apology, saying, I was jesting, commending him for his honesty, and got his promise never to repeat what had passed. I sent for my Cousin B—m H—rie, your good-brother, who, with no difficulty, for a guinea and a half, undertook and performed all that I wanted; and for a guinea more made me up a discharge for £200 Scots that I was owing to your father-in-law and his friend Mr Muirhead, which discharge I gave to John Ewart, when he desired the money; and he, at my desire, produced it to you, which you sustained.

A great many of the like instances were told, of which I cannot remember the persons, names, and things; but, says he, what vexes me more than all these, is the injustice I did Homer Maxwell, tenant to my Lord Nithsdale, for whom I was factor. I borrowed £2000 from him, £500 of which he borrowed from another hand: I gave him my bond, and, for reasons I contrived, I obliged him to secrecy. He died within the year, and left nine children, his wife being dead before himself. I came to seal up his papers for my lord's security; his eldest daughter entreated me to look through them all, and to give her an account of what was their stock and what was their debt. I very willingly undertook it; and in going through the papers, I put my own bond in my pocket. His circumstances proving bad, his nine children are now starving. These things I desire you to represent to my wife, and take her brother with you, and let them be immediately rectified, for she has a sufficient fund to do it upon; and if it were done, I think I would be easy, and therefore I hope you will make no delay.

After a short pause, I answered, 'Tis a good errand, Cool, you are sending me to do justice to the oppressed and injured; but notwithstanding I see myself come in for £200 Scots, yet I beg a little time to consider the matter. And since I find you are as much master of reason now as ever, and more than ever, I will reason upon the matter in its general view, and then with respect to the expediency of my being the messenger; and this I will do with all manner of frankness. From what you have said, I see clearly what your present condition is, so that I need not ask any more questions on that head; and you need not bid me take courage, for at this moment I am no more afraid of you than a new-born child.

Cool. Well, say on.

Ogil. Tell me, then, since such is your ability that you can fly a thousand miles in the twinkling of an eye, if your desire to do the oppressed justice be as great as you pretend, what's the reason you don't fly to the coffers of some rich Jew or banker, where are thousands of gold and silver, invisibly lift, and invisibly return it to the coffers of the injured? And since your wife has sufficient funds, and more, why cannot you empty her purse invisibly, to make these people amends?

Cool. Because I cannot.

Ogil. You have satisfied me entirely upon that head. But pray, Cool, what is the reason that you cannot go to your wife yourself, and tell her what you have a mind? I should think this a more sure way to gain your point.

Cool. Because I will not.

Ogil. That is not an answer to me, Cool.

Cool. That is one of the questions that I told you long ago I would not answer: but if you go as I desire, I promise to give you full satisfaction after you have

done your business. Trust me for once, and believe me I will not disappoint you.

Upon the 10th of April 1722, coming from Old Cambus, upon the post-road, I met with Cool on the head of the heath called the Pees. He asked me, if I had considered the matter he had recommended? I told him I had, and was in the same opinion I was in when we parted; that I would not possibly undertake his commissions, unless he could give me them in writing under his hand. I told him that the list of his grievances were so great that I could not possibly remember them without being put in writing; and that I wanted nothing but reason to determine me in that, and all other affairs of my life.

"I know," says he, "this is a mere evasion: but tell me if the Laird of Thurston will do it?"

"I am sure," said I, "he will not; and if he should, I would do all that I could to hinder him; for I think he has as little to do in these matters as myself. But tell me, Cool, is it not as easy to write your story as tell it, or ride on what-do-ye-call-him? for I have forgot your horse's name."

Cool. No, sir, it is not; and perhaps I may convince you of the reasonableness of it afterwards.

Ogil. I would be glad to hear a reason that is solid for not speaking to your wife yourself; but, however, any rational creature may see what a fool I would make of myself, if I would go to Dumfries, and tell your wife you had appeared to me, and told so many forgeries and villanies that you had committed, and that she behoved to make reparation; the consequence might perhaps be, that she would scold me; for she would be loath to part with any money she possesses, and therefore tell me I was mad, or possibly pursue me for calumny. How would I vindicate myself; how could I prove that you ever spoke with me? Mr Paton and other ministers in Dumfries would tell me the devil had spoken with me; and why should I repeat these things for truth which he, that was a liar from the beginning, had told me? C—p—l and B—r— H—rie would be upon me, and pursue me before the commissary; everybody would look upon me as brain-sick or mad: therefore, I entreat you, do not insist upon sending me so ridiculous an errand. The reasonableness of my demands I leave to your own consideration, as you did your former to mine. But dropping the matter till our next interview, give me leave to enter upon some more diverting subject. I do not know, Cool, but the information you have given may do as much service to mankind, as the redress of all these grievances would amount to. Mr Ogilvie died very soon after.—*Old Chap B ok.*

ALLAN-A-SOP.

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE MacLeans, a bold and hardy race, who, originally followers of the Lords of the Isles, had assumed independence, seized upon great part both of the Isle of Mull and the still more valuable island of Islay, and made war on the MacDonalds with various success. There is a story belonging to this clan, which I may tell you, as giving another striking picture of the manners of the Hebrideans.

The chief of the clan, MacLean of Duart, in the Isle of Mull, had an intrigue with a beautiful young woman of

his own clan, who bore a son to him. In consequence of the child's being, by some accident, born on a heap of straw, he received the name of Allan-a-Sop, or Allan of the Straw, by which he was distinguished from others of his clan. As his father and mother were not married, Allan was, of course, a bastard, or natural son, and had no inheritance to look for, save that which he might win for himself.

But the beauty of the boy's mother having captivated a man of rank in the clan, called MacLean of Torloisk, he married her, and took her to reside with him at his castle of Torloisk, situated on the shores of the sound, or small strait of the sea, which divides the smaller island of Ulva from that of Mull. Allan-a-Sop paid his mother frequent visits at her new residence, and she was naturally glad to see the poor boy, both from affection, and on account of his personal strength and beauty, which distinguished him above other youths of his age. But she was obliged to confer marks of her attachment on him as privately as she could, for Allan's visits were by no means so acceptable to her husband as to herself. Indeed, Torloisk liked so little to see the lad, that he determined to put some affront on him, which should prevent his returning to the castle for some time. An opportunity for executing his purpose soon occurred.

The lady one morning, looking from the window, saw her son coming wandering down the hill, and hastened to put a girdle cake upon the fire, that he might have hot bread for breakfast. Something called her out of the apartment after making this preparation, and her husband, entering at the same time, saw at once what she had been about, and determined to give the boy such a reception as should disgust him for the future. He snatched the cake from the girdle, thrust it into his stepson's hands, which he forcibly closed on the scalding bread, saying, "Here, Allan, here is a cake which your mother has got ready for your breakfast." Allan's hands were severely burnt; and, being a sharp-witted and proud boy, he resented this mark of his step-father's ill-will, and came not again to Torloisk.

At this time the western seas were covered with the vessels of pirates, who, not unlike the sea-kings of Denmark at an early period, sometimes settled and made conquests on the islands. Allan-a-Sop was young, strong, and brave to desperation. He entered as a mariner on board of one of these ships, and in process of time obtained the command, first of one galley, then of a small flotilla, with which he sailed round the seas and collected considerable plunder, until his name became both feared and famous. At length he proposed to himself to pay a visit to his mother, whom he had not seen for many years; and setting sail for this purpose, he anchored one morning in the sound of Ulva, and in front of the house of Torloisk. His mother was dead, but his step-father, to whom he was now as much an object of fear as he had been formerly of aversion, hastened to the shore to receive his formidable stepson, with great affectation of kindness and interest in his prosperity; while Allan-a-Sop, who, though very rough and hasty, does not appear to have been sullen or vindictive, seemed to take his kind reception in good part.

The crafty old man succeeded so well, as he thought, in securing Allan's friendship, and obliterating all recollections of the former affront put on him, that he began to think it possible to employ his stepson in executing his own private revenge upon MacQuarrie of Ulva, with whom, as was usual between such neighbours, he had some feud. With this purpose, he offered what he called the following good advice to his stepson:—"My dear Allan, you have now wandered over the seas long enough; it is time you should have

some footing upon land—a castle to protect yourself in winter, a village and cattle for your men, and a harbour to lay up your galleys. Now, here is the island of Ulva, near at hand, which lies ready for your occupation, and it will cost you no trouble, save that of putting to death the present proprietor, the Laird of MacQuarrie, a useless old carle, who has cumbered the world long enough."

Allan-a-Sop thanked his step-father for so happy a suggestion, which he declared he would put in execution forthwith. Accordingly, setting sail the next morning, he appeared before MacQuarrie's house an hour before noon. The old chief of Ulva was much alarmed at the menacing apparition of so many galleys, and his anxiety was not lessened by the news that they were commanded by the redoubted Allan-a-Sop. Having no effectual means of resistance, MacQuarrie, who was a man of shrewd sense, saw no alternative save that of receiving the invaders, whatever might be their purpose, with all outward demonstrations of joy and satisfaction; the more especially as he recollected having taken some occasional notice of Allan during his early youth, which he now resolved to make the most of. Accordingly, MacQuarrie caused immediate preparations to be made for a banquet, as splendid as circumstances admitted, hastened down to the shore to meet the rover, and welcomed him to Ulva with such an appearance of sincerity, that the pirate found it impossible to pick any quarrel, which might afford a pretence for executing the violent purpose which he had been led to meditate.

They feasted together the whole day; and, in the evening, as Allan-a-Sop was about to retire to his ships, he thanked the laird for his hospitality, but remarked, with a sigh, that it had cost him very dear.

"How can that be," said MacQuarrie, "when I bestowed this entertainment upon you in free goodwill?"

"It is true, my friend," replied the pirate, "but then it has quite disconcerted the purpose for which I came hither; which was to put you to death, my good friend, and seize upon your house and island, and so settle myself in the world. It would have been very convenient for me, this island of Ulva; but your friendly reception has rendered it impossible for me to execute my purpose, so that I must be a wanderer on the seas for some time longer."

Whatever MacQuarrie felt at learning he had been so near to destruction, he took care to show no emotion save surprise, and replied to his visitor: "My dear Allan, who was it that put into your mind so unkind a purpose towards your old friend; for I am sure it never arose from your own generous nature? It must have been old Torloisk, who made such an indifferent husband to your mother, and such an unfriendly step-father to you when you were a helpless boy; but now, when he sees you a bold and powerful leader, he desires to make a quarrel betwixt you and those who were the friends of your youth. If you consider this matter rightly, Allan, you will see that the estate and harbour of Torloisk lie to the full as conveniently for you as those of Ulva, and that, if you are disposed (as is very natural) to make a settlement by force, it is much better it should be at the expense of the old churl, who never showed you kindness or countenance, than at that of a friend like me, who always loved and honoured you."

Allan-a-Sop was struck with the justice of this reasoning; and the old offence of his scalded fingers was suddenly recalled to his mind. "It is very true what you say, MacQuarrie," he replied, "and, besides, I have not forgotten what a hot breakfast my step-father treated me to one morning.

Farewell for the present; you shall soon hear news of me from the other side of the Sound." Having said thus much, the pirate got on board, and commanding his men to unmoor the galleys, sailed back to Torloisk, and prepared to land in arms. MacLean hastened to meet him, in expectation to hear of the death of his enemy, Mac-Quarrie. But Allan greeted him in a very different manner from what he expected.

"You hoary old traitor," he said, "you instigated my simple good-nature to murder a better man than yourself! But have you forgotten how you scorched my fingers twenty years ago with a burning cake? The day is come that that breakfast must be paid for."

So saying, he dashed out the old man's brains with a battle-axe, took possession of his castle and property, and established there a distinguished branch of the clan of MacLean.—*From Tales of a Grandfather.*

JOHN HETHERINGTON'S DREAM.

In a certain small town in the south of Scotland, there lived, about three years ago, a very respectable tailor, of the name of John Hetherington—that is to say, John wore well with the world; but, like too many of his craft, he was sorely addicted to cabbaging. Not a coat could he make, not a pair of trousers could he cut out, not a waistcoat could he stitch up, but he must have a patch of this, that, and t'other, were it for no other purpose but just to serve as a bit of a memorial. One very warm evening towards the end of August 1826, John had gone to bed rather earlier than usual, but not without having laid in a very good share of a very tasty Welsh rabbit; which said rabbit, being composed of about a pound of tough cheese, of course furnished the poor tailor, after he had fairly tumbled over into the land of Nod, with something of a very curious Welsh-rabbit vision. It suddenly struck him that this life, with all its cares and anxieties, was over with him; that the finishing stitch had been put to the great work of life, and the thread of his existence cut through. In the other world, to his misfortune, he found things not moving so comfortably as he would have wished; and the old gentleman with the short horns and the long tail, rigged out in his best suit of black, was the first friend he forgathered with after passing the border.

"There's a fine morning," said the wily old dog; "how do you find yourself after long travel?"

"No that weel," stammered out the half-dead son of a goose; "no that weel; and I dinna think, all things considered, it would benefit me much to be found in such company, no offence to your reverence," as he saw his new friend's choler rise; "no offence to your reverence, I trust; but if I may be so bold, I would thank you to tell me the reason of my being here; and, above all, who's to be thankit for the honour of an introduction to your reverence?"

"That you will know shortly, friend; nay, John Hetherington, for you see I know you;" and taking a large parcel from below his left arm, he commenced to unroll it, and to the astonishment of poor John, unfolded a long sheet of patchwork, in which were found scraps of every hue, a web of many colours, all neatly stitched together; and in the

middle, by way of a set off, a large bit of most excellent blue cloth, which had been cabbaged that very morning from a prime piece which he had got into his hands for the purpose of making a marriage coat for his neighbour the blacksmith.

"Was all this stuff got fairly and honestly, good man?" said the old gentleman, with a sneer quite worthy of Beelzebub. "I suppose you will be able to recognise some of these old bits. What think you now of that piece in the middle which your eyes are fixed on—cabbaged no farther back than this morning? Come along, my old boy, come along; you are a true son of your old father, I see, and I will furnish you with as warm winter quarters as you ever enjoyed when you was half-stewed with your old maiden aunt, at the top of fifteen pair of stairs in the High Street of Edinburgh, when serving your apprenticeship with Dick Mouley-pouches."

A cold sweat broke over the poor tailor, and he felt as if he could have sunk snugly into the earth, if it had only had the goodness to open at that moment for his especial accommodation, when he saw the long bony arm stretched out, with its sharp eagle claws, to clutch him: he made a sharp bolt back, and giving vent to his feelings in a loud and long howl, which rung horribly in his ears long after opening his eyes, he found himself sprawling in the middle of his wooden floor, with all the bedclothes tumbled above him. It was the first breaking out of a fine morning: the sun was rising, and all nature looked fresh and fair; but poor John was at the point of death with sheer bodily fear and trembling, so that to get to bed again, and to sleep, would have been martyrdom; therefore he huddled on his clothes, and walked out "to snuff the caller air," and muse over his wonderful dream. The more he thought of it, the more he saw the necessity of reforming his mode of life; and, before finishing his stroll, he was an altered man, and had made up his mind never more to cabbage an inch of cloth; and, by walking circumspect and just, he trusted that his past offences might be wiped out, and that the wonderful web of many colours should no more be brought up as evidence against him. To make him the more secure in the event of forgetfulness in the hour of temptation, his foreman was let into the great secret, and had orders at all times to rub up his remembrance when there was any thing good going, which he used to do by the laconic phrase of, "Master, mind the sheet!"

A year passed over, and the terror of the dream being yet fresh in his memory, John's transactions were strictly honest. He could cut out with somewhat more considerable ease, and had lost a good deal the knack of cutting out the sly piece at the corner. But, alas! for the stability of all human resolutions, our friend was sorely tempted, and how he stood we shall soon see. He had got to hand a beautiful piece of red cloth, for what purpose I know not, whether for the coat of a field officer, or the back of a fox hunter, but a prime piece of cloth that was; he turned it over to this side, and back to that, viewed it in all lights and shades, rubbed it against the grain, and found it faultless. He had never seen such a fine piece of cloth before—scissors had never before cut such immaculate stuff. He fixed his eye wistfully on a tempting corner, looked up, and his foreman John was staring firmly in his face: he had read his thoughts.

"Master, mind the sheet!" solemnly ejaculated John.

"I'm just swithering, John; I'm just swithering: now when I mind, there wasna a piece of red cloth in all the sheet; and mair by token, there was a bit gap at one of the corners. Now, I'm

just thinking, since it maun be that all these bit odds and ends are to be evidence against me when I come to the lang count, it would be better to snick a bit aff the corner here; and that you see, John, will fill all deficiencies, and mak the sheet, since it maun appear against me, evidence, John, without a flaw!"

BLACK JOE O' THE BOW.

BY JAMES SMITH.

IN the days no sae very lang syne, when the auld West Bow o' Edinburgh was in the deadthraw o' its glory, there lived an auld blackymore named Joe Johnson. He was weel kent through a' the toun for his great ingenuity in makin' ships an' automaton figures—something like the "Punch and Judy" o' present times, but mair exquisitely finished an'—what d'ye ca' that fine word?—*artistic*?—that's it. Aweel, this man, commonly ca'd Black Joe, lived up a lang stair in the Bow, on the richt-hand side gaun doun. He made his livin' in simmer by the bonnie bits o' ships he made, displaying them for sale at the front gate o' Heriot's Wark, in Lauriston; an' whiles he took a change at the drum an' pan-pipes, wi' a wee doggie ca'd Pincher, that stood on its hint-legs when Joe was playin', wi' a tin saucer in its mouth to haud the coppers. Sometimes, when Joe was playin', and naething was comin' in, the dog wad bite somebody's leg by mistake to vary the entertainment, to Joe's unspeakable delight. But this was often followed by somebody roaring oot —"Horselip! Horselip!" an' then the drumstick flew through the crowd at somebody's head, an' Joe was generally marched to the office between twa policemen. But for a' his fiery temper when roused, he had a kind, canny way wi' him when civilly treated, an' wadna hae wranged a livin' cratur.

When the lang winter nichts set in, Joe had a show at the fit o' his stair; an' aften the Bow rang wi' his drum an' pan-pipes, as he stood at the outside o' the show, wi' a lichtit paper lantern stuck up in front, whereon was painted a rough sketch o' Billy Button on the road to Brentford, the Babes in the Wood, Tam o' Shanter on his mare Meg, pursued by the witches, wi' Cutty Sark makin' a catch at Maggie's tail, or some ither scenic representation. Whiles, when Joe was burstin' his black face in the middle o' a fine tune, some ragged imp wad roar—

Hey cocky dawdy, hey cocky dow—
Horselip, Horselip's comin doun the Bow,
Wi' his drum an' his pipe, an' his pipe, pipe, pipe!

Doun went the drum, an' aff ran Joe after the malicious urchin, the doggie first and foremost in the chase. For whether the beast had been trained, or acted through the force o' instinct, certain it is, that nae sooner was its maister ca'd "Horselip," than aff it sprang, an' fixed its teeth in the shins o' the first ane that cam in its way.

There was ae New Year's nicht that an unco mess took place wi' Joe's show. There was a wee funny dancin' figure o' a man that the laddies aye ca'd "Tooral"—ane o' the best figures in the show. This figure was on the stage singin' "Tooraladdy," an' he was at the last verse—

Tak the pan an' break his head—
Tooraladdy, tooraladdy;
That's a' as fac' as death—

when a wild loon, that had been lookin'

on wi' a greedy e'e an' a watery mouth at the figures a' nicht, unable ony langer to resist temptation, made a dart at "Tooral," and vanished wi' him oot o' the show. This created an unco commotion, for when the folk begoud to rise up in the gallery—it was a' gallery thegither—as Joe rushed out after the thief, cryin' "Polish! polish! polish!—catch a thief! catch a thief!" the whole rickety concern cam doun wi' a great crash. But they didna fa' far; for it wasna muckle mair than five or six inches frae the ground a'thegither. But the thief was never gotten that nicht, tho' it's a consolation to ken that he was banished shortly afterwards for stealin' a broon tammy an' a quarter o' saut butter frae a puir widdy woman, as she was comin' out o' a provision shop in the Canongate.

But Joe was thrown into sic a state wi' rinnin' through the toun after the thief, that next day he was delirious wi' a ragin' fever. My mither lived but an' ben wi' Joe; an' it was while gaun in noo an' then to see how the puir body was doing, that a strange interest in Joe's history was awakened in her breast. For he had cam oot wi' some very strange expressions when lyin' in the delirious state. Ance or twice he cried, "Me nebber shoot massa—me nebber shoot massa. Major murder him broder—me see 'im do it. Got pistol yet—me tell truth—me no tell lie;" an' sae he wad gang ravin' on at this gait for hours. When at last the fever had abated, an' Joe was able to come ben an' sit doun by my mither's fireside, she asked him, in her ain canny way, if he wadna like to gang back again to his native country. But the black fell a tremblin', an' shook his head, sayin' "Nebber—nebber—nebber more!" This roused my mither's curiosity to the highest pitch, for she was convinced noo, mair than ever, that some dark history was locked up in the African's breast. Ae day, a while after this, Joe cam ben an' sat doun by the fireside, as usual; for though the day was scorching hot, being in the heat o' simmer, the cratur was aye shiverin' and cowerin' wi' the cauld. Takin oot his cutty pipe, as usual, he began to fill't, sayin'—"Missy, me no lib long; me no strength—me weak as water—me no happy—wish 'im was dead."

"What way that?" asked my mither; "by my faith, ye'll live mony a lang day yet. Deein'! deil the fear o' ye!"

But Joe aye shook his head.

"Joe," says my mither, takin' his puir wasted hand in her ain, "there's something mair than weakness the matter wi' ye. I ken that, whatever ye may say; and the best thing for ye to do's to mak a clean breast o't. Whatever ye may say to me, I promise shall be as secret as the grave. Ye ken me ower weel to doot that."

Joe lookit earnestly in her face, an' syne at the door. My mither cannily closed the door, an' sat doun beside him. Then the nigger, cautioning her to mind her promise, telt her a story that sent her to her bed that nicht wi' a gey quaking heart. But as this story wadna be richtly understood to gie't in the nigger's strange broken English, I'll tell't in my ain way.

Ten years before Joe cam to Edinburgh, baith him an' his wife were slaves on Zedekiah Gilroy's plantation in Jamaica. This Zedekiah Gilroy was the second son o' Colonel Gilroy, o' Hawkesneb Hoose. I mind o' the place mysel' as weel as if it were yesterday; for mony a time I've passed it on the road to my aunty's at Cockleburgh. It's a gude fourteen hours' journey frae Edinburgh—try't ony day ye like. Aweel, the eldest son o' this Colonel Gilroy had gotten a commission in the East India Company, an' had risen to the rank o' major in ane o' the native regiments; but brocht himsel' into disgrace there by causing the death o'

ane o' his servants wi' his merciless cruelty, an' was obliged to sell oot, an' come hame in disgrace. He hadna been lang hame, when a letter cam frae his brither, requesting him to come oot an' look after his estate, for he had been twice attacked by yellow fever, an' was utterly incompetent to look after't. His overseers, he said, were rivin' him oot o' hoose an' ha', an' a'thing was gaun wrang thegither. His wife had been struck doun by the same fell disease, an' a lowness o' spirits had ta'en possession o' him, that a' the luxuries o' high life an' plenty o' siller couldna diminish. His only wish was to see his brither oot beside him, an' tak for a while the oversicht o' his affairs, till health an' strength blessed him ance mair. Aweel, under a' thae circumstances, the auld colonel advised his son to gang oot an' do his best to help his brither in his sair extremity. Sae the major, wi' an unco show o' reluctance, at last consented, an' aff he gaed to Jamaica, to play the deevil there, as he had done before in the East Indies.

Major Gilroy wasna lang at Jamaica when an unco change for the waur took place. There was naething but orderin', cursin', swearin', an' lashin' o' slaves frae mornin' till nicht. Joe's wife was amang the first that succumbed to the murderous whip, an' Joe himsel' cam in for mair than his share. Rumours soon began to spread that the maister himsel' was tyrannised ower by his brither. He was ane o' the very kindest o' maisters to his slaves, until his brither cam like a frosty blicht, and filled the whole estate wi' lamentation. Sae this state o' things gaed on for nearly six months, when ae day Joe, exasperated at the inhuman treatment he was receivin' at the major's instigation, took leg-bail to the sea-shore, an' hid himsel' amang the cliffs. There he lurked, day after day, crawlin' oot at nicht to gather shell-fish an' dulse frae the rocks, an' castin' his e'e ower the wide watery waste for the welcome sicht o' a sail to bear him frae the accursed spot. Mair than ance he had heard the shouts o' the manhunters on his track, intermingling wi' the terrible bay o' the bluidhound. But a' their vigilance was eluded by the impregnable nature o' his position, high up amang the rocks.

On the morning o' the thirteenth day after his escape, he cautiously emerged frae his high den, an' looked around him as usual. The air was intensely hot, an' dark-red masses o' cloud were fast drivin' through a black, lowering sky, the certain presage o' a fearfu' storm. The sea lay calm and still, for there wasna a breath o' wind stirring, an' flocks o' sea-birds were filling the sultry air wi' their harsh, discordant cries. Suddenly a flash o' forked lichtnin' illumined the black, murky sky, an' a loud clap o' thunder reverberated amang the mountains. Then the lichtnin' an' thunder became incessant, the sea lashed itsel' into foam an' fury, an' the rain poured doun in torrents. As the slave surveyed the elements thus ragin' in a' their terrific grandeur, the distant sound o' carriage-wheels caught his ear. Nearer an' nearer they cam, till he recognised a gig driven by the major comin' on at a rattlin' pace. His brither sat beside him, propped up wi' shawls and cushions, an' appeared to be at that moment in an attitude o' earnest entreaty; while every noo and then the faint sound o' voices in noisy altercation was borne on the gale that noo roared ower land an' sea, though what they said it was utterly impossible to distinguish. The slave looked on, first in astonishment, an' syne in horror; for, instead o' turnin' the horse's head hamewards as the storm cam on, the major persisted in drivin' richt on through the sands as the spring-tide was fast comin' in, in spite o' the agonised entreaties o' his brither to turn. At last the gig was stopped, as the horse, plunging and restive, went up to the middle in water.

Then a deadly struggle took place that lasted scarcely a minute, when the report o' a pistol reverberated amid the thunder, an' the next instant the body o' the invalid was hurled into the roaring surge. Then, indeed, the horse's head was turned hameward, an' aff went the gig in richt earnest, but no before a wild yell o' execration frae the cliff warned the murderer that the deed had been witnessed by mair than the e'e o' God abune. Scarcely had the sound o' the wheels died away, when the slave descended the lofty precipitous rocks wi' the agility o' a wild cat, an' plunged into the sea to save, if it were yet possible, his puir maister. But the dark purple streaks on the surface o' the water where the deed was accomplished telt, ower fearfully, that the sharks were already thrang at their horrid wark, an' that a' hope o' saving him, if he werena clean deid after the pistol-shot was fired, was for ever gane. Therefore he reluctantly swam back to the shore, wi' barely enough o' time to save himsel'. Before scaling the cliff, he lifted the pistol that the murderer, in the hurry an' confusion o' the moment, had left behind him on the beach. This incident filled the slave wi' fresh alarm, for it was certain the major wad come back for't before lang. Sae a' that nicht he wearied sair for the mornin' to come in. Slowly at last the storm subsided, as the first pale streaks o' dawn were visible in the horizon; an' as the daylicht lengthened mair an' mair, he saw a dark speck floating on the waves, that on a nearer approach proved to be a boat that had burst frae its moorings frae some ship in the distant harbour. Fervently thanking God for this providential means o' deliverance, he descended frae his freindly shelter for the last time, an' boldly struck out for the boat, which he reached in safety. Seizing the oars, he steered oot to the open sea, wi' a fervent prayer that the dark drizzly fog that enveloped the ocean wad continue to shield him, for a time, frae his merciless enemy, till some friendly ship wad tak him up. It was high time; for he hadna gi'en half-a-dozen strokes, when the sound o' angry voices, among which was the major's, was borne on the breeze, an' again the deep-toned bay o' the bluidhound nerved his arms wi' a' the energy o' desperation. Farther an' farther oot he gaed, battling wi' the heavily swelling rollers that threatened every moment to engulph the boat he steered sae bravely. For mony a lang and weary hour he struggled wi' the giant waves, enveloped in fog, till the darkness o' nicht had nearly set in; an' he was fast gi'en up a' hopes o' succour, when the tout o' a horn near at hand warned him that a ship was bearing doun upon him. He had barely time to steer oot o' her way, when he was hailed by the captain, an' asked where he cam frae. Joe made answer that he was the sole survivor o' the *Nancy*, bound for England, that had sprung a leak, an' foundered in last nicht's gale. At that moment a terrible wave capsized the boat, and Joe was struggling in the water. But a rope was flung oot to him, an' he speedily drew himsel' on board. This circumstance o' the boat's being swamped was a mercy for Joe; for had the name o' the ship she belanged to met the captain's e'e, the lee wad hae been fand oot, an' it micht hae fared waur wi' him. But the captain treated Joe wi' great kindness, and telt him he micht work his passage to Leith, which was the port o' their destination. The vessel was a Leith trader named the *William and Mary*, an' was on her passage hame frae the Island o' Cuba.

Here, let it be remembered, Joe wasna to be blamed a'thegither for the doonricht lee he telt the captain. He was a rinaway slave in the first place, an' had the captain kent the truth, it's mair than likely he wad hae delivered him up at the first port he touched at on the voyage hame. In the second place,

there was nae ither witness o' the fearfu' crime binna himsel'; an' he had the tact to see that evidence resting on the sole testimony o' a rinaway slave, mair especially when that slave micht be reasonably suspected o' vindictive feelings against the murderer, wad be treated wi' scorn an' indignation, an' even add to the horrors o' his ain death. Therefore Joe kept his ain coonsel, and when the vessel arrived at Leith, he wandered up to Edinburgh, and resided for mony a lang year in the West Bow, makin' his livin' in the manner already related, and wi' the secret carefully locked up in his breast until now.

"Aweel, Joe," said my mither, when she had heard him oot, "that's an unco story, man. But are ye aware that the auld colonel's aye livin' yet, an' that it wad be a duty to let him ken the truth?" Here Joe lookit in her face sae pitifu' an' imploring like, that she didna find it in her heart to press the question ony mair at that time. But when the body gaed awa' ben, my mither sat thinkin' and thinkin' till the day was far spent; an' for mony a lang day after that she hadna muckle peace o' mind.

Ae mornin' she put on her bannit and shawl, and said she wadna be hame till late. Although I was a bit lassie at the time, I jaloused where she was gaun, but I never let on. It wasna till late, late at nicht that she cam hame, an' then she telt me she had been at Hawkesneb Hoose on a pretence to see if an auld servant she had kent mony a year sin' was aye bidin' there. As she rang the gate-bell, she said a fearfu' sense o' shame an' disgrace comin' ower an auld man made her swither; but there was the lodge-keeper's wife comin' to the gate, an' it was ower late noo to gang back. She then inquired for ane Jess Tamson, that had been a servant up at the big hoose three years sin'; but the woman said she didna ken o' onybody o' that name servin' there noo. My mither said that was an unco pity, as she had cam a lang way to see her, an' her feet were sair blistered wi' the roads. The woman then opened the gate, an' asked my mither into the lodge, an' offered her a cup o' tea, for which my mither was very thankfu'. Then, when the twa fell on the crack, my mither said the laird wad be gey far doon the brae noo, for he was an auld man in Jess's time. My mither came oot wi' this in her ain pawky way, to hear for certain whether the colonel were dead or livin'.

"The auld colonel's dead an' gane a year sin'," said the woman, "but his son the major's expected hame in a month; an' I'm sure there has been sic a scrubbin' an' cleanin' an' hammerin', that what wi' masons, joiners, plasterers, painters, and glaziers, there hasna been muckle rest for the servants this last fortnicht."

"An' is the major married?" asked my mither.

"Married! no as yet," said the woman. "They say he's turned unco silent and cantankerous since his brither's death, sees naebody, an' never gangs to sleep without wax candles burnin' a' nicht by his bedside."

"The major never gangs to sleep without wax candles burnin' a' nicht by his bedside!" said my mither, slowly comin' ower the words after her. "Deary me, that's strange!" tryin' sair to keep in her breath. "What kind o' death was't his brither dee'd o', hae ye heard?"

"What kind o' death was't? It was murder, dounricht murder!" said the woman; "an' done too by ane o' his ain slaves through revenge. But it was a grand day for the major when his brither dee'd; for he wasna a month gane when the plantation was selt aff, an' the major left Jamaica wi' mony a braw thousand pound in his pouch."

My mither then asked if the major cam hame at that time. The woman said, "No, he had gane to Italy, and

aye kept sendin' letters to his faither every noo and then, makin' apologies about his health being in a delicate state, and declaring his resolution to abide by the advice o' his doctors to remain in a warmer climate, in spite o' the auld laird's anxious entreaties for him to come hame. I often used to wonder at the major's continued absence; an' it lookit strange that he didna come to lay his faither's head in the grave, though he's comin' hame noo. As for the slave that did the deed, they raised a hue an' cry after him for a while; but the murderer was never gotten, an' it's not likely he ever will be noo. It seems the major had been gi'en his brither an airing in a gig, when they were attacked by the slave frae behind, wha fired a pistol at his brither oot o' revenge, and then fled, wounding him mortally. The major pursued, but when he had gane a lang distance and fand he couldna mak up to him, he cam back to the spot where the murder had been committed, expecting to see the body; but, astonishing to relate, the body had disappeared. And the man that did the deed, as I said before, was never gotten; nor is it very likely he ever will be, after sic a lang lapse o' time. It seems he fled awa to the mountains among the Maroons, as they ca' them."

"That's hard, hard to say," said my mither; "but God has his ain ways o' workin', lass, an' maybe the deed 'll be brocht to licht in a way that you an' me little dream o'." Then she rose up, an' spoke o' gaun hame; but the woman wadna hear o't, sayin' the nicht was ower far gane, an' she wad mak her very welcome to a bed beside the bairns. At that moment the gudeman himsel' cam in, an' seeing her anxiety to gang awa, he said the mail-coach wad be gaun by in half an hour, an' he had nae doot the guard wad gie her a lift into the toun. Sae she waited till the coach cam by, an' fortunately got a ride in.

Aweel, when my mither had composed hersel' a bit, after she had telt this, she filled her cutty-pipe, an' begoud to blaw. "Lassie," says she to me, after a wee, "fetch doun yer faither's Bible frae the shelf." It aye got the name o' my faither's Bible, though he had been deid an' gane mony a year. Sae I gied her the Bible; an' then I heard her slowly readin' ower thae verses frae the Book o' Proverbs—"Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh; for the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken." This she read ower twa-three times to hersel', an' syne put a mark at the place, and gaed awa to her bed. And lang after that, as the puir body lay half doverin', I heard her comin' ower and ower thae bonnie verses, till she was fast asleep. The first thing she did, when the mornin' cam in, was to tell Joe o' her journey an' its result. The puir African lifted up his hands in astonishment when she telt him the murder had been laid to his charge. But she took doun the Bible again, an' read ower the verses that had sae powerfully arrested her attention the nicht before; and as she read them, a gleam o' triumphant exultation shone in the e'e o' the puir nigger—a look o' conscious innocence, that dispelled every vestige o' doot in my mither's mind, if she ever had ony, an' made her sympathise a' the mair wi' the lingerin' agony he had endured since the murder was committed. He noo declared his readiness to lodge an accusation against Major Gilroy; for the fear o' his word being misdooted vanished as if by magic frae his mind, mair especially when my mither led him to understand that, being in a free country, nae slave-owner could touch him, and that his word would be ta'en wi' the best white man among them a'. Hooever, my mither advised him no to be rash, but to bide a wee till the major's arrival, as an accusation pre-

ferred against him in his absence micht be construed into an evidence o' guilt on the part o' the accuser; for the wily, lang-headit bodies o' lawyers were fit for onything, an' siller could do an awfu' lot, an' mak black look white ony day. Besides, Great Britain was at this time deeply engaged in the Slave Trade, and micht be ower glad to tak the major's part. Sae Joe took her advice, an' prayed that Job wad teach him patience.

Three weeks had passed away, when Joe, unable ony langer to control the wild tumult that reigned in his breast, gaed awa oot to Hawkesneb Hoose, carryin' his drum an' pan-pipes wi' him as usual. It had been a drizzly sma' rain a' day; an' when he reached his journey's end, as nicht set in, he was wet through an' through. The place was a' in darkness, and as he stood at the gate, an' looked up the lang dusky avenue, he half resolved to gang back, an' trust to time an' the retributive justice o' Heaven to prove his innocence. But an impulse he couldna resist chained him to the spot, an' he rang the gate-bell. Nae answer was returned; a second time he rang, but still wi' the same result. Then he pushed the gate forward, and to his surprise it swung heavily back on its hinges. Wi' an unsteady, tremblin' step, he advanced up the dark avenue till he reached the mansion. The hoose seemed silent an' deserted, binna a sma' licht that twinkled in ane o' the lower windows, an' as he drew nearer, the sound o' voices reached his ear. Then the resolve to gang back again took possession o' him; but the strange impulse to advance gained the mastery, an' he lifted the kitchen knocker. A lass wasna lang in makin' her appearance at the door wi' a lichtit candle in her hand; an' nae sooner did she see the black man stannin' oot in the dark than she gied a roar as if Joe had been the very deevil himsel'. This brocht ben a' the rest o' the servants; an' a bonnie hurly-burly was set up as this ane an' the ither ane wondered hoo he had got in.

"That's your negligence, Willie Johnston," said an auld leddy dressed in black, that appeared to be the hoose-keeper; "I'm sure ye needna hae been sae thochtless as that, particularly at a time when the major's lookit for every minute."

This was addressed to the keeper o' the lodge, that had come up to the big hoose wi' his wife at the hoosekeeper's invitation, to while awa the nicht wi' a cup o' tea an' a dram. Willie Johnston fell a swearin', an' was aboot to lay violent hands on Joe, when the butler, a wee fat birsy body, but no bad-hearted, ordered him to desist; and seeing the nicht was sae cauld an' wat, he brocht Joe into the kitchen, and thinkin' him a cadger, he set doun baith bread, meat, an' beer before him, tellin' him to look alive, for it wadna do to stay lang there. The hoosekeeper didna offer ony objection to this, as mony a ane wad hae dune; but to tell the truth, it seems that the twa were unco gracious, for when the tane took whisky, the tither took yill—sae that settles that. When Joe had sat for a while preein' the mercies set before him, ane o' them—the laundry-maid—gi'en a wistfu' look at Joe's drum an' pan-pipes, said she hadna haen a dance since gude kens the time, an' the cook, an' the kitchen-maid, an' a young crater o' a flunkey, expressed themsel's in a similar manner.

"A dance!" cried the hoosekeeper, makin' a pretence o' being angry. "A bonnie daft-like thing it wad be to welcome hame the laird wi' a drum an' pan-pipes, as if he were the keeper o' a wild-beast show. A fiddle michtna be sae bad."

Joe saw what was wanted. It was only a quiet invitation to play for naething; sae he took a lang heavy pull at the beer-jug, an' syne struck up a lilt that set them a' up on their feet the-

gither. An' sae on he played, tune after tune, until a breathin' time was ca'ed; an' the whisky an' beer in plenty were again gaun round, when the gate-bell was rung wi' great violence.

"Flee for yer life to the gate, Willie Johnston," cried the hoosekeeper, "an' stop that skirlin'. I'm sure I never expected him the nicht noo, when it's sae late. What's to be dune? Haste ye, Sally, to the major's room, an' on wi' a fire like winkin'!" and in an instant a' was confusion, an' every ane stannin' in each ither's road.

The soond o' carriage wheels was heard comin' up the avenue, and the lood gruff voice o' Major Gilroy cursing the carelessness o' the lodge-keeper startled every ane there, but nane mair sae than Joe; for that voice brocht back the past in a' its terrible reality, an' he kent the crisis was comin' wi' a crash either for him or his auld relentless oppressor. But him and his pan-pipes were then as completely forgotten by the servants as if they had never been there. But as quietness was at last restored, an' the major had shut himsel' up in his room, wi' a stern injunction to the butler that he wasna to be disturbed wi' supper or onything else that nicht, an' threatenin' instant dismissal to the first that gied him ony cause o' annoyance, Joe asked the hoosekeeper, wi' a palpitatin' heart, if he micht gang noo.

"No, for a thoosand pound I wadna open that door," said the hoosekeeper; "ye had better bide awhile yet till he's asleep. I never saw sic a savage-lookin' man in my life, as he cam in at the front door. He's completely changed since I mind o' him, when he wasna muckle mair than a laddie. An' sic a restless, suspicious e'e as he's got! I dinna like it—I positively dinna like it. But I'll never pit up wi' sic a man—I'll tak to drink, as sure's I'm a livin' woman. An' what the deil brocht *you* here?—makin' things fifty times waur! Ye'll never get oot o' here this nicht—I'm certain o' that. An' yet there's that brute," pointing to Pincher, that a' this time had been keepin' quiet under the table, thrang worryin' at a big bane—"what's to be dune if it barks?"

But Joe gied her to understand there was nae fear o' that, for he had him ower weel trained to mak ony disturbance; but oh! he was anxious—anxious to be off. The woman, hooever, remained inexorable. There was therefore nae help for't but to sit doun on a chair by the kitchen fireside, an' be slippit oot cannily in the mornin' before the major was up. Sae they a' gaed awa to their beds, an' Joe was left alane in the kitchen, wi' Pincher snockerin' at his side. But Joe couldna close an e'e, wi' the intensity o' his thocht; for here, at last, had the providence o' God brocht the murderer and his accuser beneath the same roof. Joe lay doverin' an' waitin' wearily for the mornin' comin' in. The weather had cleared up, an' the moon was streamin' in through the kitchen windows. The fire had gane oot, an' the air felt cauld an' chill; an' gradually a feeling o' horror took possession o' Joe that he couldna shake off. At last Pincher gaed a low growl, as if he had heard somebody comin'. Joe could hear naething at first, but by degrees he became sensible that a step was advancin', saft, an' almost noiseless, doun the kitchen stair; an' slowly the door opened as a figure dressed in a lang dressin'-goun, an' a lichtit wax candle in its hand, entered the kitchen. Speechless and unable to move, Joe saw his mortal enemy, the major, starin' him in the face; but as he silently returned the gaze, he became sensible that it was void o' consciousness. The major was walkin' in his sleep, that was evident, for he kept movin' up an' doun the kitchen, mutterin' to himsel'. He laid doun the candle on the floor in ane o'

his rounds, an' said in a tone sae distinct that Joe could hear every word—

"Will the sea give up its dead?—No, no. Why does his face always turn up amid the roaring waves, as if to taunt me with the crime, and drag me to eternal perdition? Pshaw! it's but a fancy after all. But the slave who eluded my vengeance—curses on him!—where is *he?* Wandering over the face of the earth, to confront me at last, perhaps, and accuse me as my brother's murderer. But will they believe *him?* They will not—nay, they dare not—they dare not. Yet oh! the black countenance of that infernal fiend dogs me wherever I go, and will not give me peace—peace—peace!"

Then he took up the candle an' made for the door, drew back, an' again cam into the kitchen; then left the kitchen a second time, an' opened the door. The sudden rush o' the nicht air put oot the candle, an' he again entered the kitchen. At that moment he stumbled ower a chair, an' Pincher gaed a loud bark, as the major started to his feet, restored to consciousness. And as the moon's rays revealed every surrounding object wi' a ghastly distinctness, the first sicht that met his e'e was Joe—Joe stannin' before him, rigid and motionless—an auld rusty pistol in his richt hand presented at him, an' a wild glare o' rage an' defiance flashin' in his unearthly-lookin' e'en. The suddenness o' the appearance o' this apparition—for apparition he thocht Joe to be—completely paralysed him for the moment. His knees gaed knock, knockin' thegither, as Joe cried—

"Murderer! murderer! murderer! Me tell truth—me no tell lie. You dam rascal—you villain—me hear to speak truth, and truth me speak spite of eberyting. Ha! what you say now?"

As Joe said this, he advanced nearer an' nearer, till the pistol touched the major's breast. But there he stood, powerless to resist; for his belief still was that Joe was a phantom, till the growlin' o' the doggie brocht him to himsel' mair than onything else; and, fired by the energy o' desperation, he made a snatch at the pistol. But the nigger was ower quick for him; for he sprang past the major, and oot at the kitchen door that the major had providentially opened in his sleep, darted doun the avenue and oot at the gate, syne awa at full speed on his lang journey hame, which he reached by nine o'clock in the mornin', mair deid than alive. He cam into my mither's just as she sat doun to her tea, an' gaed her the history o' his last nicht's adventure, as already related. My mither's advice to him was to gang directly to the authorities, an' lodge an accusation. Joe did sae, and the result was that Captain S——, accompanied by half a dozen constables, immediately took the coach for Hawkesneb Hoose, which they reached about seven o'clock.

When they arrived there, the butler, hoosekeeper, an' a' the lave o' them cam out, wonderin' at seein' the police authorities, accompanied by the black man. But when Captain S—— asked, in a stern manner, if he could see the major, an' telling the men to watch the hoose, baith back and front, their surprise was turned into consternation. The major wasna up yet, the butler said; and his orders the nicht before were that naebody was to disturb him unless his bell rang. And it was neither his business nor onybody else's to intrude where they werena wanted. On hearing this, the captain peremptorily demanded to see his maister, otherwise it wad be necessary to force an entrance into his room. At this the hoosekeeper and butler baith gaed up, an' cried the major's name; but nae answer cam. Then they tried to open the door, but the door was evidently locked frae the inside, for it wadna open. When the captain heard this, he gaed up himsel', an' burst open the door. On entering the room, he lookit round, but could

see naething. The bed lay untouched; there had been naebody there, that was evident. But there was a sma' dressing-room that opened frae the bedroom, and on lookin' there he saw the major lyin' in a doubled-up position on the carpet, wi' his hands clenched, an' his e'en starin' wide open. An empty phial lay beside him, that telt, ower surely, what he had been after. The captain placed his hand on his face, but it was quite cauld; an' there wasna the least doot that he had been dead for a lang time. When the captain cam doun and communicated the news, there was sair wonder an' astonishment, but no muckle grief, 'od knows. The major had been a perfect stranger to them a', except the auld hoosekeeper; an' to do the body justice, she shed a tear or twa; but it's my belief a third never made its appearance, for a' she tried.

Naething farther could be done in the matter. The major had anticipated the demands o' justice by takin' justice on himsel', an' the wuddy had been cheated o' a victim, an' a multitude o' morbid sightseers rightly ungratified. But oh, the joy o' Joe's heart when he cam into my mither's next mornin'! for it seems they had remained in the hoose a' that nicht, till the coach cam by on the Edinburgh journey. The fear that had hung ower him like a nichtmare was dispelled for ever, an' his innocence triumphantly established beyond the least shadow o' a doot. Kindly my mither shook him by the hand, as she said—"The hand o' God's been in't, Joe, my man; an' praise be to his name for sendin' a bonnie glint o' sunshine oot o' the lang dreary darkness that's encompassed ye. An' never forget the verses that gaed ye sic blessed consolation;" an' saftly an' solemnly she cam ower them again—"Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh; for the Lord shall be thy confidence, an' shall keep thy foot from being taken." An' Joe looked happy an' contented, an' never forgot my mither's kindness.

Joe gaed aboot the streets o' Edinburgh mony a lang day after this. He never taen up the show again, that I mind o'; but mony a bonnily riggit ship he selt at Heriot's Wark, and on the Earthen Mound, amang the panoramas and the wild-beast shows, and doun at the stairs at bonnie auld Shakespeare Square, that's noo awa; an' mony a time hae I heard his drum an' pan-pipes when I was baith a young quean an' a married wife. He dee'd a short time before the richt-hand side o' the West Bow was taen doun, an' there's no a single vestige noo to be seen o' the auld land where the show used to be, wi' the lichtit paper-lantern at the door, an' the pan-pipes playin' "Tooraladdy," that cheered sae mony young hearts in the days that are noo past an' gane.—*From "Peggy Pinkerton's Recollections."*

THE FIGHT FOR THE STANDARD.

By James Paterson.

Lieutenant Charles Ewart, better known as "Sergeant Ewart of the Greys," was born in Kilmarnock about the year 1767, and enlisted in that regiment in 1789. He served under the Duke of York in the Low Country Campaigns of 1793-4, and shared in all the victories and defeats which the allied arms experienced. The disasters encountered by the British arose in a

great measure from the duplicity of the Dutch, as well as from the military incapacity of the Royal general. At the battle, if we mistake not, of Fleurus, in the Netherlands, where the Republican forces, after a protracted contest, were the victors, Ewart had the misfortune to be taken prisoner. Towards the close of the action, the Greys were so thoroughly surrounded by the enemy that escape was considered next to impossible. As the only means of preventing their entire capture, they were ordered to disperse in small parties of twos and threes, each to exert himself as he best might in finding his way to the allied army, which had undertaken a retrograde movement. It was evening as Ewart and his companions endeavoured to thread their way amidst the smoke and spreading darkness by which they were enveloped. They had not proceeded far, when, perceiving a body of French cavalry at a short distance, they were compelled to seek safety in an opposite direction. Though hotly pursued, they put spurs to their horses, and soon distanced their enemies. At length they found themselves in the vicinity of a wood, and, ignorant of the direction in which they were proceeding, they determined on taking advantage of its shelter for the night. Tying their jaded horses to a tree, they lay down beside them. Tired out with the day's fatigue, they fell soundly asleep; nor did they awaken until rudely stirred from their slumber in the morning by a large body of French infantry who had taken possession of the wood. Resistance being out of the question, they instantly surrendered; but nothing could save them from the abuse and insult of the soldiers, by whom they were plundered of everything valuable. Fortunately, not above two hours afterwards, the advance corps of the French were beaten back by a number of Austrian troops, who in turn took the captors captive, and Ewart and his comrades were restored to their regiment, not, however, without having obtained permission of the Austrian officer in charge of the prisoners to take from the Frenchmen the property of which they had been plundered, and which they did with something of *interest*, by way of repaying the usage they had experienced.

In the retreat of the British through Holland after the disastrous battle of Nimguen, though conducted by Sir Ralph Abercrombie with great skill and success, considering the desperate circumstances in which they were placed, the army suffered the utmost privations. The winter was unprecedentedly severe, and the loss of the stores and baggage added greatly to their sufferings. Hundreds perished from excessive cold, hunger, and fatigue. Many affecting anecdotes are told of the vicissitudes endured. While on the march one day, near a place, the name of which we forget, the faint wailings of a child were heard not far from the roadside. Ewart dismounted, and proceeding to the spot, found a woman and child lying amongst the snow. The mother was dead, but the infant, still in life, was in the act of sucking the breast of its lifeless parent. "Albeit unused to the melting mood," Ewart felt overcome by the spectacle. There was no time, however, for sentimentalism; but lifting the child in his arms, and wrapping his cloak around it, he remounted with his tender charge. On reaching the encampment for the evening, he applied to the colonel, who generously offered to defray the expenses of a nurse; but so entirely were the women of the army absorbed with their own misfortunes, that not one of them could be found to take care of the little orphan. Ewart was at length fortunate in discovering the father of the child, a sergeant of the 60th regiment, who was so much affected that he could scarcely be restrained from retracing his steps in the vain hope of finding his partner still in life. Three years after the return of the

army to Britain, and while the Greys were stationed in the south of England, Ewart was one evening called to the head inn of the town. The soldier to whom he was introduced grasped him warmly by the hand, as he inquired whether he knew him. Ewart replied in the negative. A short explanation sufficed. The stranger was the father of the child whom he had saved, come to tender his thanks in a more substantial manner than was in his power on the retreat in Holland. He had since that period been raised to the rank of sergeant-major, and the little orphan was then a thriving boy at home with his grandmother. He insisted on presenting Ewart with a sum of money, but the offer was firmly rejected. He pressed him, however, to accept a silver watch as a memento of his gratitude.

With the exception of a small portion of the regiment which took part in the Peninsular War, the Scots Greys were not again called abroad till 1815. During the intervening period, no opportunity of distinguishing themselves occurred. Ewart, who had borne himself with uniform propriety, and gained the esteem of his superior officers by his soldierly conduct, was early advanced as a sergeant, while his skill in the sword exercise procured him further emolument by being appointed master-of-fence to the regiment. The unlooked-for escape of Napoleon from Elba gave a new impulse to the military ardour of this country. The Greys, as well as the household troops, were called to arms, and in the short but important campaign in Belgium, covered themselves with glory on the plains of Waterloo. The splendid charge of General Ponsonby's cavalry brigade—composed of the First Royals, Greys, and Inniskillings—is matter of history. It was in one of those dashing affairs on the 18th, when covering the Highland brigade against a dense mass of Invincibles, that the two eagles were captured by the Greys and Royals. As the cavalry passed through the open columns of the Highlanders, the cry of "Scotland for ever!" created an enthusiasm which nothing could withstand, and the French infantry were scattered before them. Upwards of two thousand prisoners were taken in this single onset. Sergeant Ewart was engaged hand to hand with an officer, whom he was about to cut down, when a young ensign of the Greys interceded in his behalf, and desired that he might be passed to the rear. He had scarcely complied with the request, when, on hearing the report of a pistol, he turned and beheld the ensign falling from his saddle, and the French officer in the act of replacing the weapon with which he had savagely taken the life of his preserver. Enraged at the ingratitude of the Frenchman, Ewart immediately turned upon him, and, deaf to his supplications, cut him down to the brisket. This was the work only of a moment, for the conflict still raged, the French infantry having been supported by a numerous array of cuirassiers and lancers. Dashing forward, he now came within reach of the standard-bearer of one of the Invincible regiments to which they were opposed. A short conflict ensued, when the French officer fell beneath Ewart's sword, and the staff of the eagle stuck fast in the ground, which was soft, so that he was enabled to lay hold of it without further trouble. Had the standard fallen, he could not have recovered it in the *melée*. Wheeling round, Ewart was in the act of making off with his prize, when a lancer, singling him out, galloped forward and hurled his spear at his breast. With all his reputed quickness in defence, he had just strength enough to ward off the blow, so that the lance merely grazed his side; then raising himself in his stirrups, he brought his antagonist to the ground with one cut of his sword. In riding away with the valuable trophy, Ewart experienced another narrow escape—a wounded

Frenchman, whom he had supposed to be dead, having raised himself on his elbow, and fired at him as he passed. The ball fortunately missed him, and he escaped to the rear, when he was ordered to proceed with the standard to Brussels.

The prowess of Ewart was greatly applauded, not less in Belgium and France than in Britain, and he subsequently, through the influence of the late Sir John Sinclair, obtained a commission in a veteran battalion as a reward for his services. When in Edinburgh in 1816, he was invited to a Waterloo dinner at Leith, where Sir Walter Scott proposed his health in an eloquent and highly complimentary speech. Little accustomed to civilian society, Lieutenant Ewart felt diffident to reply; and, in a note to the chairman, begged that he might be excused, adding, with the bluntness of a soldier, that "he would rather fight the battle of Waterloo over again, than face so large an assemblage." The company, however, would not be denied the gratification of a full-length view of his person, and he was under the necessity of shaking off his diffidence by acknowledging the toast in a brief reply, which he made amidst the rapturous cheers of his entertainers. He was also publicly entertained at dinner in Ayr and Kilmarnock, and was presented with the freedom of Irvine.

CATCHING A TARTAR.

By D. M. Moir.

From the first moment I clapped eye on the caricature thing of a coat that Tammie Bodkin had, in my absence, shaped out for Cursecowl the butcher, I foresaw, in my own mind, that a catastrophe was brewing for us; and never did soldier gird himself to fight the French, or sailor prepare for a sea-storm, with greater alacrity, than I did to cope with the bull-dog anger, and buffet back the uproarious vengeance of our heathenish customer.

At first I thought of letting the thing take its natural course, and of threaping down Cursecowl's throat that he must have been feloniously keeping in his breath when Tammie took his measure; and, moreover, that as it was the fashion to be straight-laced, Tammie had done his utmost trying to make him look like his betters; till, my conscience checking me for such a nefarious intention, I endeavoured, as became me in the relations of man, merchant, and Christian, to solder the matter peaceably, and show him, if there was a fault committed, that there was no evil intention on my side of the house. To this end I despatched the bit servant wench, on the Friday afternoon, to deliver the coat, which was neatly tied up in brown paper, and directed, "Mr Cursecowl, with care," and to buy a sheep's-head; bidding her, by way of being civil, give my kind compliments, and inquire how Mr and Mrs Cursecowl, and the five little Miss Cursecowls, were keeping their healths, and trusting to his honour in sending me a good article. But have a moment's patience.

Being busy at the time turning a pair of kuttikins for old Mr Mooleypouch the mealmonger, when the lassie came back I had no mind of asking a sight of the sheep's-head, as I aye like the little blackfaced in preference to the white, fat, fozy Cheviot breed; but most providentially I catched a gliskie of the wench passing the shop window, on the road over to Jamie Coom the smith's, to get it singed, having been dispatched there by her mistress. Running round the counter like lightning, I opened the sneck, and halooed to her to wheel to

the right about, having, somehow or other, a superstitious longing to look at the article. As I was saying, there was a providence in this, which, at the time, mortal man could never have thought of.

James Batter had popped in with a newspaper in his hand, to read me a curious account of a mermaid that was seen singing a Gaelic song, and combing its hair with a tortoise-shell comb, someway terrible far north about Shetland, by a respectable minister of the district, riding home in the gloaming after a Presbytery dinner. So, as he was just taking off his spectacles cannily, and saying to me—"And was not that droll?"—the lassie spread down her towel on the counter, when, lo, and behold! such an abominable spectacle! James Batter observing me run back, and turn white, put on his glasses again, cannily taking them out of his well-worn shagreen case, and, giving a stare down at the towel, almost touched the beast's nose with his own.

"And what, in the name of goodness, is the matter?" quo' James Batter; "ye seem in a wonderful quandary."

"The matter!" answered I, in astonishment, looking to see if the man had lost his sight or his senses; "the matter! who ever saw a sheep's-head with straight horns, and a visnomy all colours of the rainbow—red, blue, orange, green, yellow, white, and black?"

"'Deed it is," said James, after a nearer inspection; "it must be a lowsy-naturay. I'm sure I have read most of Buffon's books, and I have never heard tell of the like. It's gey and queerish."

"'Od, James," answered I, "ye take eyerything very canny; you're a philosopher, to be sure; but I daresay if the moon was to fall from the lift, and knock down the old kirk, ye would say no more than 'it's gey and queerish.'"

"Queerish, man! Do ye not see that?" added I, shoving down his head mostly on the top of it. "Do ye not see that? awful, most awful! extonishing!! Do ye not see that long beard? Who, in the name of goodness, ever was an eyewitness to a sheep's-head, in a Christian land, with a beard like an unshaven Jew, crying 'owl clowes,' with a green bag over his left shoulder?"

"Dog on it," said James, giving a fidge with his hainches; "dog on it, as I am a living sinner, that is the head of a Willie-goat."

"Willie or Nannie," answered I, "it's not meat for me; and never shall an ounce of it cross the craig of my family—that is as sure as ever James Batter drave a shuttle. Give counsel in need, James: what is to be done?"

"That needs consideration," quo' James, giving a bit hoast. "Unless he makes ample apology, and explains the mistake in a feasible way, it is my humble opinion that he ought to be summoned before his betters. That is the legal way to make him smart for his sins."

At last a thought struck me, and I saw farther through my difficulties than ever mortal man did through a millstone; but, like a politican, I minted not the matter to James. Keeping my tongue cannily within my teeth, I then laid the head, wrapped up in the bit towel, in a corner behind the counter; and turning my face round again to James, I put my hands into my breeches-pockets, as if nothing in the world had happened, and ventured back to the story of the mermaid. I asked him how she looked—what kind of dress she wore—if she swam with her corsets—what was the colour of her hair—where she would buy the tortoise-shell comb—and so on; when just as he was clearing his pipe to reply, who should burst open the shop-door like a clap of thunder, with burning cat's een, and a face as red as a soldier's jacket, but Cursecowl himself, with the new killing-coat in his hand, which, giving a tremendous curse (the words of which are not essentially necessary for me to repeat, being an elder of our kirk), he made

play flee at me with such a birr, that it twisted round my neck, and mostly blinding me, made me doze like a tottum. At the same time, to clear his way, and the better to enable him to take a good mark, he gave James Batter a shove, that made him stoiter against the wall, and snacked the good new farthing tobacco-pipe, that James was taking his first whiff out of; crying at the same blessed moment—

"Hold out o' my road, ye long, withered wabster. Ye're a pair of havering idiots; but I'll have pennyworths out of both your skins, as I'm a sinner!"

What was to be done? There was no time for speaking; for Cursecowl, foaming like a mad dog with passion, seized hold of the ell-wand, which he flourished round his head like a Highlander's broadsword, and stamping about with his stockings drawn up his thighs, threatened every moment to commit bloody murder.

If James Batter never saw service before, he learned a little of it that day, being in a pickle of bodily terror not to be imagined by living man; but his presence of mind did not forsake him, and he cowered for safety and succour into a far corner, holding out a web of buckram before him, me crying all the time—"Send for the town-officer! Will ye not send for the town-officer?"

You may talk of your General Moores and your Lord Wellingtons as ye like; but never, since I was born, did I ever see or hear tell of anything braver than the way Tammy Bodkin behaved, in saving both our precious lives, at that blessed nick of time, from touch-and-go jeopardy; for, when Cursecowl was rampauging about, cursing and swearing like a Russian bear, hurling out volleys of oaths that would have frighted John Knox, forbye the like of us, Tammie stole in behind him like a wild cat, followed by Joseph Breekey, Walter Cuff, and Jack Thorl, the three apprentices, on their stocking-soles; and having strong and dumpy arms, pinned back his elbows like a flash of lightning, giving the other callants time to jump on his back, and hold him like a vice; while, having got time to draw my breath, and screw up my pluck, I ran forward like a lion, and houghed the whole concern—Tammie Bodkin, the three faithful apprentices, Cursecowl, and all, coming to the ground like a battered castle.

It was now James Batter's time to come up in line; and though a douce man (being savage for the insulting way that Cursecowl had dared to use him), he dropped down like mad, with his knees on Cursecowl's breast, who was yelling, roaring, and grinding his buck-teeth like a mad bull, kicking right and spurring left with fire and fury; and, taking his Kilmarnock off his head, thrust it, like a battering-ram, into Cursecowl's mouth, to hinder him from alarming the neighbourhood, and bringing the whole world about our ears.

Such a stramash of tumbling, roaring, tearing, swearing, kicking, pushing, cuffing, rugging, and riving about the floor!! I thought they would not have left one another with a shirt on: it seemed a combat even to the death. Cursecowl's breath was choked up within him, like wind in an empty bladder; and when I got a gliskie of his face, from beneath James's cowl, it was growing as black as the crown of my hat. It feared me much that murder would be the upshot, the webs being all heeled over, both of broad cloth, buckram, cassimir, and Welsh flannel; and the paper shapings and worsted runds coiled about their throats and bodies like fiery serpents. At long and last, I thought it became me, being the head of the house, to sound a parley, and bid them give the savage a mouthful of fresh air, to see if he had anything to say in his defence.

Cursecowl, by this time, had fo[illegible]ble

assurance of our ability to overpower him, and finding he had by far the worst of it, was obliged to grow tamer, using the first breath he got to cry out—

"A barley, ye thieves! a barley! I tell you, give me wind. There's not a man in nine of ye!"

Finding our own strength, we saw, by this time, that we were masters of the field; nevertheless we took care to make good terms when they were in our power, nor would we allow Cursecowl to sit upright till after he had said, three times over, on his honour as a gentleman, that he would behave as became one.

After giving his breeches-knees a skuff with his loof, to dad off the stoure, he came, right foot foremost, to the counter-side, while the laddies were dighting their brows, and stowing away the webs upon their ends round about, saying,—

"Maister Wauch, how have ye the conscience to send hame such a piece o' wark as that coat to ony decent man? Do ye dare to imagine that I am a Jerusalem spider, that I could be crammed, neck and heels, into such a thing as that? Fie, shame—it would not button on yourself, man, scarecrow-looking mortal though ye be!"

James Batter's blood was now up, and boiling like an old Roman's; so he was determined to show Cursecowl that I had a friend in court, able and willing to keep him at stave's end.

"Keep a calm sough," said James Batter, interfering; "and not miscall the head of the house in his own shop; or, to say nothing of present consequences, by way of showing ye the road to the door, perhaps Maister Sneck-drawer, the penny-writer, 'll give ye a caption-paper with a broad margin, to claw your elbow with at your leisure, my good fellow."

"Pugh, pugh!" cried Cursecowl, snapping his finger and thumb at James's beak; "I do not value your threatening an ill halfpenny. Come away out your ways to the crown of the causey, and I'll box any three of ye, over the bannys, for half-a-mutchkin. But, 'odsake, Batter, my man, nobody's speaking to you," added Cursecowl, giving a hack now and then, and a bit spit down on the floor; "go hame, man, and get your cowl washed; I daresay you have pushioned me, so I have no more to say to the like of you. But now, Maister Wauch, just speaking hooly and fairly, do you not think black burning shame of yourself, for putting such an article into any decent Christian man's hand, like mine?"

"Wait a wee—wait a wee, friend, and I'll give ye a lock salt to your broth," answered I, in a calm and cool way; for, being a confidential elder of Maister Wiggie's, I kept myself free from the sin of getting into a passion, or fighting, except in self-defence, which is forbidden neither by law nor gospel; and, stooping down, I took up the towel from the corner, and, spreading it upon the counter, bade him look, and see if he knew an auld acquaintance!

Cursecowl, to be such a dragoon, had some rational points in his character; so, seeing that he lent ear to me with a smirk on his rough red face, I went on:

"Take my advice as a friend, and make the best of your way home, killing-coat and all; for the most perfect will sometimes fall into an innocent mistake, and, at any rate, it cannot be helped now. But if ye show any symptom of obstripulosity, I'll find myself under the necessity of publishing you abroad to the world for what you are, and show about that head in the towel for a wonder to broad Scotland, in a manner that will make customers flee from your booth, as if it was infected with the seven plagues of Egypt."

At sight of the goat's head, Cursecowl clapped his hand on his thigh two or three times, and could scarcely muster good manners enough to keep himself from bursting out a-laughing.

"Ye seem to have found a fiddle, friend," said I; "but give me leave to tell you, that ye'll may be find it liker a hanging-match than a musical matter. Are you not aware that I could hand you over to the sheriff, on two special indictments? In the first place, for an action of assault and batterification, in cuffing me, an elder of our kirk, with a sticked killing-coat, in my own shop; and, in the second place, as a swindler, imposing on his Majesty's loyal subjects, taking the coin of the realm on false pretences, and palming off goat's flesh upon Christians, as if they were perfect Pagans."

Heathen though Cursecowl was, this oration alarmed him in a jiffie, soon showing him, in a couple of hurries, that it was necessary for him to be our humble servant; so he said, still keeping the smirk on his face—

"Keh, keh, it's not worth making a noise about after all. Gie me the jacket, Mansie, my man, and it'll maybe serve my nephew, young Killim, who is as lingit in the waist as a wasp. Let us take a shake of your paw over the counter, and be friends. Bye-ganes should be bye-ganes."

Never let it be said that Mansie Wauch, though one of the king's volunteers, ever thrust aside the olive branch of peace; so, ill-used though I had been, to say nothing of James Batter, who had got his pipe smashed to crunches, and one of the eyes of his spectacles knocked out, I gave him my fist frankly.

James Batter's birse had been so fiercely put up, and no wonder, that it was not so easily sleeked down; so, for a while, he looked unco glum, till Cursecowl insisted that our meeting should not be a dry one; nor would he hear a single word on me and James Batter not accepting his treat of a mutchkin of Kilbagie.

I did not think James would have been so doure and refractory, funking and flinging like old Jeroboam; but at last, with the persuasion of the treat, he came to, and, sleeking down his front hair, we all three took a step down to the far end of the close, at the back street, where Widow Thamson kept the sign of 'The Tankard and the Tappit Hen;' Cursecowl, when we got ourselves seated, ordering in the spirits with a loud rap on the table with his knuckles, and a whistle on the landlady through his foreteeth, that made the roof ring. A bottle of beer was also brought; so, after drinking one another's healths round, with a tasting out of the dram glass, Cursecowl swashed the rest of the raw creature into the tankard, saying—

"Now take your will o't; there's drink fit for a king; that's real 'Pap-in.'"

He was an awful body, Cursecowl, and had a power of queer stories, which, weel-a-wat, did not lose in the telling. James Batter, beginning to brighten up, hodged and leuch like a nine-year-old; and I freely confess, for another, that I was so diverted, that, I daresay, had it not been for his fearsome oaths, which made our very hair stand on end, and were enough to open the stone-wall, we would have both sate from that time to this.

We got the whole story of the Willie-goat, out and out, it seeming to be with Cursecowl a prime matter of diversion, especially that part of it relating to the head, by which he had won a crown-piece from Deacon Paunch, who wagered that the wife and me would eat it, without ever finding out our mistake. But, aha, lad!

The long and the short of the matter was this. The Willie-goat had, for eighteen years, belonged to a dragoon marching regiment, and, in its better days, had seen a power of service abroad; till, being now old and infirm, it had fallen off one of the baggage-carts, and got its leg broken on the road to Piershill, where it was sold to Cursecowl, by a corporal, for half-a-crown and a dram. The four quarters he had managed to sell for mutton, like lightning, this one buying a jigget, that

one a back ribs, and so on. However, he had to weather a gey brisk gale in making his point good. One woman remarked that it had an unearthly, rank smell; to which he said, "No, no—ye do not ken your blessings, friend; that's the smell of venison, for the beast was brought up along with the deers in the Duke's parks." And to another wife, that, after smell-smelling at it, thought it was a wee humphed, he replied, "Faith, that's all the thanks folks get for letting their sheep crop heather among the Cheviot hills," and such-like lies. But as for the head, that had been the doure business. Six times had it been sold and away, and six times had it been brought back again. One bairn said that her "mother didna like a sheep's-head with horns like these," and wanted it changed for another one. A second one said, that "it had tup's een, and her father liked wether mutton." A third customer found mortal fault with the colours, which, she said, "were not canny, or in the course of nature." What the fourth one said, and the fifth one took leave to observe, I have stupidly forgotten, though, I am sure, I heard both; but I mind one remarked, quite off-hand, as she sought back her money, that "unless sheep could do without beards, like their neighbours, she would keep the pot boiling with a piece beef, in the meantime." After all this—would any mortal man believe it?—Deacon Paunch, the greasy Daniel Lambert that he is, had taken the wager, as I before took opportunity to remark, that our family would swallow the bait! But, aha, he was off his eggs there!

James and me were so tickled with Cursecowl's wild, outrageous, off-hand, humoursome way of telling his crack, that, though sore with neighering, none of the two of us ever thought of rising; Cursecowl chapping in first one stoup, and then another, and birling the tankard round the table, as if we had been drinking dub-water. I daresay I would never have got away, had I not slipped out behind Lucky Thamson's back—for she was a broad fat body, with a round-eared mutch, and a full-plaited check apron—when she was drawing the sixth bottle of small beer, with her corkscrew between her knees; Cursecowl lecturing away, at the dividual moment, like a Glasgow professor, to James Batter, whose een were gathering straws, on a pliskie he had once, in the course of trade, played on a conceited body of a French sick-nurse, by selling her a lump of fat pork to make beef-tea of to her mistress, who was dwining in the blue Beelzebubs.

Ohone, and woe's me, for old Father Adam and the fall of man! Poor, sober, good, honest James Batter was not, by a thousand miles, a match for such company. Everything, however, has its moral, and the truth will out. When Nanse and me were sitting at our breakfast next morning, we heard from Benjie, who had been early up fishing for eels at the water-side, that the whole town talk was concerning the misfortunate James Batter, who had been carried home, totally incapable, far in the night, by Cursecowl and an Irish labourer—that sleeped in Widow Thamson's garret—on a hand-barrow, borrowed from Maister Wiggie's servant-lass, Jenny Jessamine.—*Mansie Wauch.*

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